

# **To Hold Out Belonging**

## **Identity and Difference in a Heideggerian Critique of Butler and Hegel**

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*To my mother and father*



## ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

In zeitgenössischen Diskussionen über Identität, Differenz und Subjektivität hat das Denken Judith Butlers eine entscheidende Rolle gespielt. Laut ihren Theorien ist Identität als einen Status oder eine Situation zu verstehen, wo das Subjekt von historischen "Machtstrukturen", die eine ursprüngliche Selbstheit und Substantialität ausschließen, konstituiert wird. Da diese Situation für Butler weder einem spezifischen historischen Vorfall, noch einem eindeutig ontologischen Faktum entstammt, besteht die Frage nach dem Ursprung oder dem Anfang dieses Problems der Identität. Durch das Denken Martin Heideggers verteidigt die Dissertation die These, dass das genannte Problem die Vollendung der Subjektsmetaphysik andeutet, statt ihre Überwindung. Wo Identität in Subjektivität gegründet wird, wird Macht zum Inhalt der Identität. Diese Argumentation wird u.a. durch einen Vergleich von Heideggers und Butlers jeweiligen Auseinandersetzungen mit G.W.F. Hegel entwickelt, sowie mit Hilfe einer selbstständigen Darstellung von Hegels Philosophie. Laut Hegel wird Identität durch die Sehnsucht nach dem Sein als Vermittlung von Subjektivität und Objektivität motiviert, wo das Selbstbewusstsein beide jenseits der Zersplitterung aufnimmt. Für Butler wäre diese Einverleibung unmöglich, da Subjektivität immer geschichtlich, geteilt und mannigfaltig ist. Für Heidegger liegt das Problem bei der Vorstellung von Sein als Subjektivität und Objektivität, und beim Verständnis vom Menschen als Grund der Versöhnung dieser beiden. Heideggers "Der Satz der Identität" (1957) wird in diesem Kontext als eine Antwort auf das metaphysische Verständnis der Identität analysiert. In diesem Text stellt Heidegger seinen Begriff vom Zusammengehören von Sein und Mensch dar, als Selbigkeit die aus der ontologischen Differenz zwischen Sein und Seiendem entsteht. Im Austrag dieser Differenz, erkennt der Mensch, wie seine primäre Zugehörigkeit eher die Zugehörigkeit zur Existenz als solche, als die zu objektiven oder subjektiven Seienden, ist. Der Begriff von Zusammengehören ist mit dem Begriff *Ereignis* verknüpft, der Selbigkeit als ein Geschehnis bezeichnet. Die Abhandlung umfasst die zentralen Werke Butlers vor 2006, Hegels *Wissenschaft der Logik*, die "kleine" *Logik* und die *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, sowie das Spätdenken Heideggers zusammen mit einer Auswahl seiner früheren Werke, u.a. *Sein und Zeit*.



## ABSTRACT

In contemporary discussions on identity, difference and subjectivity, the thinking of Judith Butler has played a significant role, viewing identity as a problematic question of how the subject is constituted by historical structures of power that deprives it of original ownness and substantiality. As this situation for Butler stems neither from a historical occurrence, nor is clearly ontological, the question of the origin of this problem of identity and power remains. Through the thinking of Martin Heidegger, the present study develops the argument that this problem indicates the completion of subject metaphysics, not its overcoming. When identity is thought and lived in terms of subjectivity, power will be its condition. This argument is first developed through a comparison of Butler's and Heidegger's respective appropriations of Hegel's philosophy, together with an independent account of Hegel's thinking. For Hegel, identity involves a strive for being as a mediation of subjectivity and objectivity, where consciousness incorporates both beyond their split. According to Butler, this is impossible, as subjectivity and objectivity are multiple, temporal and shared. For Heidegger however, the problem lies in the very thought of being as a connection of subjectivity and objectivity, and the understanding of the human as the ground of this reconciliation. I will thereafter examine Heidegger's "The Principle of Identity" (1957) as a response to this metaphysical comprehension of identity. Here, Heidegger develops his notion of a *belonging-together* of man and being, as a Sameness grounded in an enduring of the ontological difference between being and beings. In holding out this difference, man discovers that his primary belonging is that to the very being of his existence as such, rather than beings of subjective or objective kind. The notion of belonging-together is closely connected to the notion of the event (*Ereignis*), signifying Sameness as occurrence. The study covers Butler's central writings up to 2006, Hegel's *Encyclopedia Logic*, *Science of Logic* and *Phenomenology of Spirit*, as well as the whole of Heidegger's late thought on this topic from the 30's and onward together with a selection of his earlier works, among them *Being and Time*.

Key words: identity, ontological difference, belonging-together, being, Nothing, human being, *Ereignis*, subjectivity, power



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## **A NOTE ON LANGUAGE AND TRANSLATION**

As my approach to Heidegger and Hegel from the beginning has been more thematical than conceptual, I will for the most part use the English translations of other authors throughout the study. Exceptions will be indicated. To enable an accessible reading, all quotations of works in other languages than English are placed in the footnotes, while the English translations are found in the body text. Page or paragraph numbers to the English editions of Heidegger's and Hegel's works will be indicated in brackets following the references to the German editions. A special attention will not be payed to Heidegger's distinction between *Seyn* and *Sein*; in both cases, I will consistently use the translation "being", not the often employed "beyng". The argumentation, with its consideration of the difference between the "earlier" and "later" Heidegger, should not be affected by this. "The human being" will be referred to with the pronoun "it". This neutrality is not intended as a commentary on gender, but rather as a means by which the human essence is highlighted as something in its own right, beyond and before gender issues.

## INTRODUCTION

### **Identity in Butler, Hegel and Heidegger: subjectivity and power, *Dasein* and being**

When the question of identity is discussed within the so-called continental philosophical tradition today, it is most often in the context of an alleged dissolution of unity, subjectivity and metaphysical foundations. Since her *Gender Trouble*,<sup>1</sup> written in 1990, Judith Butler has remained a leading voice in many of these discussions, with an account of identity founded on a “problematizing suspension of the ontological”.<sup>2</sup> Yet, the phenomenological and hermeneutical presuppositions of this standpoint – such as the association of identity with questions of subjectivity and selfhood – cannot avoid ontology. On the contrary, I will argue, they are understandable only on the basis of the kind of relationship to being that the human being upholds at a particular time in history, a relationship that at the same time must be regarded as a transformation within being itself. This argument will be grounded in the thought of Martin Heidegger.

The first presupposition of the modern debate on identity is to be found in an overarching shift between ancient Greek and modern philosophy, a shift in the thought of being as well as in the thought of identity, showing that these two from the beginning belong together as philosophical questions.

With a philosophy that has reached us in the form of cryptical fragments, Heraclitus is often regarded as the first thinker of the occidental tradition to acknowledge that being implicates recurring tensions, a dynamic of transition and transformation,<sup>3</sup> sometimes characterized in terms of ἔρις (strife) and πόλεμος (war).<sup>4</sup> It is only insofar as being undergoes changes of this kind, that it can involve an equilibrium.

In his single known poem, entitled “On Nature”, Parmenides regarded the opposite perspective, thinking being in terms of “the unshaking heart of well-rounded Truth”.<sup>5</sup> According to its own essence, being allows no ruptures within itself; as it is the shelter of everything *in* being, differentiations are only chimerically outside of it. This did not mean that being was understood as a static substance; on the contrary, it was revealed as a unity only in a specific

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<sup>1</sup> Henceforth referred to as *GT*.

<sup>2</sup> Judith Butler, “The Force of Fantasy: Feminism, Mapplethorpe, and Discursive Excess”, *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* (1990), Vol. 2(2), p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> See Heraclitus, Fragm. 8, 10, 26, 31, 88 and 122.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Fragm. 80.

<sup>5</sup> “ἡμὲν Ἀληθείης εὐκυκλέος ἀτρεμῆς ἤτορ”, Parmenides, “On nature”, Fragm. 1.29. Transl. from the Greek by A. Hermann, in: Arnold Hermann, *To Think Like God* (2004), p. 156.

mode of being and thinking on the part of the human, namely the mode of νοεῖν. Thus, for Parmenides, the unity of being intrinsically involves human existentiality. This is an important philosophical stance to which I will return in the work, explaining Heidegger's position partly against the background of this thought.

With Plato, an attempt to mediate between the thoughts of Heraclitus and Parmenides was made. Being was here comprehended as idea, as a form of unity beyond the differentiated multiplicity of the world. Idea was the eternal sphere of identity, on the basis of which the differentiations and temporal variations of beings were to be understood. Robert Sinnerbrink expresses Plato's significance with the following words:

By interpreting difference as otherness, the non-being that articulates determinate being, Plato represents a pivotal point in the history of the problem of identity and difference: non-being is defined as otherness, and negation is presented as the operation that marks the determinate identity of something in contrast with an other. The apparent opposition between what is and otherness is therefore intrinsic to being itself.<sup>6</sup>

According to Aristotle's modification of the Platonic idea, identity was rather thinkable in terms of an inherent, unified substance within the specific, finite thing in question. Substance was the essence of every entity, determining its form, genus and specific characteristics. With Aristotle, substance metaphysics became more or less equal to metaphysics as such.

It is with the thinking of Descartes that a change in orientation occurs, so decisive that it would transform the very landscape of occidental philosophy, as a turn "from the principle of the unity of being to the unity of self-consciousness".<sup>7</sup> With the thinking ego as point of departure, the identity of being was now to be sought in the unifying abilities of self-consciousness – the question was no longer that of the apprehension of being in the form of a substance, but of the capacity of reflexive thought. From the examination of substance, metaphysics turned to the interrogation of the subject, the latter now regarded as the center of everything in being.

With Kant and German idealism, the central debate question would be how to understand the nature of this subject, as well as the unity between subjectivity and objectivity that the human mind was thought to accomplish. Far from being a question of mere epistemology, identity equally became the problem of the social and historical dimension of self-

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<sup>6</sup> Robert Sinnerbrink, *Metaphysics of Modernity* (2001), p. 34.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*

confirmation and self-reflexivity. How could the subject articulate itself as a totality, in a manner that could also account for its contingent being in a historical world? To a large degree, I will show, this development of the question obtains its decisive, modern form from Hegel's philosophy. Partly, but not only by means of Hegelian thought, the Cartesian paradigm still directs and forms the ontology of the modern accounts of identity, be it in an alleged contestation of it or not. Still today, identity is thought in terms of an outward or inward reflexivity both performed by and referring back to the subject. In this respect, the subject has remained the axiomatic seat of the self, as the self is grasped in terms of an experience in which the I confirms itself in a knowledge of its own subjectivity.

Following the development of this paradigm, the very means by which this confirmation can be achieved would come to be understood as circumstances that throw the unity of self-consciousness into permanent instability, perhaps even excluding its possibility. With Hegel, the presupposition of self-reflexivity was regarded to be the mediation between subjectivity and objectivity. Objectivity, as well as the subjectivity of others, was not an immediate part of the subject, but a foreignness that must be appropriated, *discovered* in its unity with self-consciousness. This active appropriation was at the same time a *return* into an identity that holds the own as well as the foreign, subjectivity as well as objectivity. Hence, for Hegel, identity, as an *internal* status of self-consciousness, reflects an *external* unity; identity is self-accomplishment, the achievement of selfhood, and at the same time the arrival of a unity encompassing the whole of shared, human time-space.

For Butler, the subject's dependency on the subjectivity of others entailed that the very presumption of an achievable unity in self-consciousness and of the world must be challenged. If self-reflexivity was dependent on the reflection of oneself in others, as well as in objects belonging not only to the own subject, but to others, then this reflexivity is fundamentally broken from the beginning. Subjectivity, because it pertains to more than one self, is what tears identity apart as an internal and external or collective state of being. In this respect, because subjectivity is constituted by an otherness that challenges ownness, *power* is according to Butler the name for the content of identity. In an appropriation of Michel Foucault's central thought, power is regarded as that which not merely influences, but creates the subject, and is located beyond its immediate will. In her main work on Hegel's influence on contemporary philosophy on the subject, *Subjects of Desire*,<sup>8</sup> Butler shows how Hegel's conception of subjectivity is challenged by so-called French theory of the 20<sup>th</sup> century through an empha-

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<sup>8</sup> Hereinafter referred to as *SD*.

sis on the finitude of the subject, its bodily limits and temporal character. Accordingly, she argues, it is “split” in Lacan, “displaced” in Derrida and altogether “dead” in Deleuze and Foucault.<sup>9</sup>

Although unfolded in this theoretical context, identity in Butler’s thinking nevertheless remains defined by the strive for an attainment of the subject, as a matter of accomplishing an experience of the subject’s coincidence with itself. As Sari Roman-Lagerspetz articulates it in an extensive study on the Butler-Hegel-relationship, identity according to these equivocal philosophical premises must be defined as a “striving for the impossible”.<sup>10</sup>

With these thoughts, Butler captured a predicament that is still widely articulated in philosophy, the social sciences and gender theory. In the legacy of Butler and Foucault among others, identity as a question of selfhood or existentiality has been analysed further as a position of being hemmed or thrown between boundedness and self-legislation, or even between paralysing passivity and limitless self-creation. It is constantly contested where in this polarity that identity has its final domain. A compromise admits it as a condition where the subject belongs to itself not despite, but *through* the fact that it obtains its constitution from the world, history and other subjects. But the neutrality of this compromise remains questionable, for identity would not be discussed in these terms if it had not already been experienced as a dispersal and loss of selfhood of vicious rather than neutral kind. Identity today is equal to the subject’s experience of being caught in the web of powers of its indebtedness, haunted by them, or by its very structure of intersubjectivity. The subject is obliged to identify itself according to various historical structures, yet remains different from them in a sense that gives rise to a seemingly intractable existential problematic.

The question around which this dissertation will be centered is the following: taking the theories of Butler as point of departure, how can we find a deeper understanding of the ontological origins of this problem, and can there be a possible overcoming of it? What kind of identity is made possible by this overcoming? The question will be traced through the main body of her production from *GT* up to the 2005 work *Giving an Account of Oneself*,<sup>11</sup> with a main focus on *The Psychic Life of Power*<sup>12</sup> and *SD*.<sup>13</sup> By posing the question in this way, I

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<sup>9</sup> *SD*, p. 175.

<sup>10</sup> Sari Roman-Lagerspetz, *Striving for the Impossible* (2009), p. 255. Hereinafter referred to as *Striving*.

<sup>11</sup> Hereinafter referred to as *GaA*.

<sup>12</sup> Hereinafter referred to as *PLP*.

<sup>13</sup> As Butler is still publishing theoretical works, this selection must be commented. According to my view, her theoretical standpoints have not undergone any radical change after 2005, and they are unfolded and presented in a clearer manner during the earlier period. Also, it is mainly the theoretical foundations of these works that have contributed to the shaping of the contemporary landscape of theories on subjectivity and identity.

have, as mentioned, already revealed one of my ground theses, namely, *that* this problem is of ontological nature. For Butler, ontology is most often understood to be synonymous with metaphysics as substance metaphysics.<sup>14</sup> Yet, her very formulation of the problem of identity and subjectivity inevitably raises the question of ontological origins. For the most part her understanding of power is discussed in political contexts, as a phenomenon understandable only from out of its historical, contingent situations – at the same time however, power would not admit for its own abolishment: there is simply no position outside of power.<sup>15</sup> Because of the latter fact, the self in its very constitution is characterized by an “ontological ek-stasis”.<sup>16</sup> Thus, the question of the ontology of the problem of identity, I will demonstrate, cannot be separated from the question of the problem itself, from its phenomenology, historicity or hermeneutics.

In its simultaneous appropriation and critique of Hegel’s philosophy, Butler’s account is characterized by a lack of consideration of the thought of being upon which the Hegelian philosophy on identity and difference rests. Yet it is the thought of being that allows Hegel to problematize the structure of self-consciousness in the first place. According to him, the search for identity is determined by an underlying strive for being, as a mode where the I is mediated to itself in such a respect that its “being” itself, logically expressed as a version of the law of identity as “I am I”, reconciles self-consciousness’ inner division between subjectivity and objectivity. That I “am” myself in this respect implies that I find myself in something that bridges subjectivity and objectivity, the split of which is located in the very reflexivity of self-consciousness. The strive for identity aims for a (re)turn to being, in which being, on its part, becomes conscious of itself as a self and thus *spirit*. It is the elaboration of this thought in the *Science of Logic*,<sup>17</sup> the *The Science of Logic* as part one of the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences in Basic Outline*,<sup>18</sup> and the *Phenomenology of Spirit*<sup>19</sup> that will be examined in this study.

This said, my aim is also to show why the Butlerian interpretation of Hegel is motivated. By way of Heidegger’s philosophy, I will demonstrate why the Hegelian definition of identity as a reconciliation of subject and object ultimately cannot uphold the thought of being that it presupposes. Being, Heidegger argues throughout his whole production, is that which cannot

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<sup>14</sup> See *GT*, p. 28.

<sup>15</sup> *SD*, p. 219.

<sup>16</sup> Judith Butler, *Undoing Gender* (2004), p. 250. Hereinafter referred to as *UG*.

<sup>17</sup> *Wissenschaft der Logik, Werke I and II*. Hereinafter referred to as *WL*.

<sup>18</sup> *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse, Werke 8*. Hereinafter referred to as *EW*.

<sup>19</sup> *Phänomenologie des Geistes, Werke 3*. Hereinafter referred to as *PhG*.

be understood along this polarity of subjectivity and objectivity to begin with. Through its own internal logic, the focus of the Hegelian account of identity shifts from being to subjective and objective beings.

An attempt to think beyond the Butlerian paradox of identity, as well as the Hegelian ambiguity, will thereafter be unfolded on the basis of the thought of Heidegger. His imprint on the philosophical tradition is found in the novel means by which he posed the question of being anew after Nietzsche, with the ambition to release it from its metaphysical context, rather than abandoning it. One of his most original thoughts was the being-historical interpretation of metaphysics found in the works from the late 30's and onward. Here, being is grasped as what gives itself in terms of epochal manifestations of withdrawal and unconcealment. Metaphysics, contracting in subject metaphysics, is according to Heidegger the way in which being discloses itself as and in a concealment of itself. Subject metaphysics is the epoch in which the human being approaches and experiences being as that which is generated in the manifestation of its subjectivity. Heidegger characterized this as a situation where the *ontological difference* between being and beings is forgotten. In a remembrance of this difference, his argument follows, in the recognition and experience of what it means that being is not a being, can being reign anew as the primordial dimension that allows our human existence. Turned towards itself and its subjectivity, by contrast, the human loses an authentic relation to its existence, exactly as this turn obscures that the main belonging of this particular being is the belonging to being.

It is in the texts collected in volume 11 of the *Gesamtausgabe, Identity and Difference*,<sup>20</sup> and “The Principle of Identity” (“Der Satz der Identität”) in particular, that Heidegger develops a new way of understanding how the ontological difference entails reciprocity as Sameness (τό αὐτό/*Selbigkeit/das Selbe*) between being and the thinking human being. Significantly, the thought is unfolded as a conversation with both Hegel and Parmenides. For Heidegger, the ground of all identity is a more original togetherness of the human and being, in which both first appear in their essence. “Belonging-together” (*Zusammengehören/Zusammengehörigkeit*) would be his notion of an identity so primordial that the term does not even convey an originator or subject of the belonging in question. This notion is in turn closely connected to the concept of *Ereignis* (often translated as “enowning”, “appropriation” or “event”; with a few exceptions, I will use the last term), referring to the event of

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<sup>20</sup> Hereinafter referred to as *IuD*.

the manifestation of being in its unconcealment. This event does not occur outside of human existence, but is in unconditional need of it.

Correspondingly, it is in the event that the human first experiences what it means to be as a human being – to be as *Dasein*, a concept lacking an English equivalent. The relation between the notions of the event and the belonging-together in Heidegger is far from settled, but could perhaps be characterized in the following way: while belonging-together concentrates on the form or the phenomenology of this reciprocity of being and man, the event captures its temporal and historical dimension, thus showing that this phenomenology can *be* only as an occurrence, as a happening that also involves time – that it is no resting, theoretical fact, but a question of an enactment. Yet, it is the notion of belonging-together that will be the leading concept of this study; while the literature on the notion of the event is vast, there are hitherto no extensive works on this concept.

The thought that this notion expresses will be discussed in relation to Heidegger's characterization of the ontological difference as a matter of "holding out" (*Austrag*, *austragen*). This expression aims to emphasize that belonging-together only prevails where there is an *enduring* of being, in terms of a dwelling in the Nothing that holds being apart from human existence. It is this characteristic of the belonging-together that demonstrates how identity for Heidegger is no question of mere equivalence, harmony or equilibrium, but of existential facticity.

The philosophical standpoints and arguments of the texts of *IuD* are partly a development of themes from Heidegger's posthumous works from the 30's, among them his *Contributions to Philosophy*.<sup>21</sup> Next to these, all key works by Heidegger that touch upon the articulation of this figure of the relationship of being and man will be taken into consideration in this study. A close reading of the theme of authenticity, selfhood and identity in *Being and Time* will also be carried out.<sup>22</sup>

It may seem questionable to read Butler through the eyes of Heidegger, especially as Heidegger's later thought often has been rendered as "obscure", and his account of identity as "empty of content",<sup>23</sup> thereby presumably precluding an applicable phenomenology of existentiality and of the human. Taking the "turn" from his earlier philosophy of the fundamental ontology of *Dasein* to a thinking of being "from out of itself" into consideration – how can the

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<sup>21</sup> *Beiträge zur Philosophie (vom Ereignis)*, GA 65. Henceforth referred to as *Beiträge*.

<sup>22</sup> *Sein und Zeit*, GA 2. Henceforth referred to as *SZ*.

<sup>23</sup> Sinnerbrink (2001), p. 265.

identity of the human, historical and social self still be accounted for within this framework?<sup>24</sup> Can Heidegger account for the complexities of contemporary identity constitutions, with their assumed political dimensions and their background of concrete, contingent historical structures? The objection that Heidegger's thinking of being does not account for the various contingent identities in which we are immersed today, must be viewed as correct – it does not speak to the human subject in this form of identity. As his thinking is an attempt to carry out an ontological *historicization* of the modern condition, however, he speaks to the *distress* of this situation. By extension, my argument follows, his analysis of the modern, metaphysical subject paradigm can serve as an illumination of the problem of the ambiguity of contemporary identity constitution. His notion of the human being as Dasein, denoting this being in its relationship to being, is an attempt to highlight not only the problem of metaphysics, but to articulate a relationship between the human and being that reverses the subject-object-relationship by which man today is defined *and* defied. Thus, Werner Beierwaltes' claim that Heidegger's account of identity would be the most important one after Hegel's is, according to my argumentation, still valid.<sup>25</sup> The aim of this dissertation is to show that Heidegger provides a thought of being and identity that can account for the Butlerian identity problem, and show us the path on which it can be overcome.

Heidegger's understanding of identity is not only based on a confrontation with Hegel, but on a re-appropriation of Parmenides as well, of precisely the thought of a Sameness between being and the human mind that prevails in an existential decision that is also carried out by the human part. This echoes in Heidegger's account as he formulates the thought of a reciprocity where the activity on the part of the human being is re-interpreted as a decision to surrender to being.

It is, I will argue, when the subject is challenged as the center of identity, and the human being instead is understood in terms of its Dasein, that identity can be disentangled from power, as that which is generated where subjects share a world of objects. Heidegger offers us an account of identity that can point out another way to be with others, in history and in space, where we are ourselves not through claiming ourselves, nor others, but by letting ourselves to be claimed by being.

Finally, a note on thematic choices: I am aware of the fact that I have omitted to develop several interesting themes and concepts indirectly touched upon in this study, for example the

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<sup>24</sup> This question is for instance posed by David Howarth, *Poststructuralism and After* (2013), p. 101.

<sup>25</sup> Werner Beierwaltes, *Identität und Differenz* (1980), p. 4.

question of freedom, truth, and ἀλήθεια. However, this would fall outside of the scope of the present thesis. A limitation is always needed to ensure the quality of a work.

### **Review of previous literature**

As the topic of this dissertation involves various thinkers and traditions, I have limited the account of the vast secondary literature on Butler, Hegel and Heidegger to those sources which in one way or another touch upon the theme of identity, difference and subjectivity.

In the case of Butler, my interest is in her as a philosophical thinker only, and more precisely in her explicit and implicit confrontation with the metaphysical tradition. When her theory on gender is considered in the present study, it will be examined from this perspective. Employing this view on her corpus, I am mainly in debt to Roman-Lagerspetz's work. This work can be counted as the most rigorous examination of the Hegelian legacy of Butler hitherto,<sup>26</sup> showing how Butler's whole thought must be understood from out of a confrontation with the German thinker. The study is therefore a challenge of Butler on a philosophical level, posing the question of whether her thinking is consequent in relation to its assumed philosophical presuppositions. The common ground of Hegel and Butler, according to Roman-Lagerspetz, is the view that the self in its strive for identity is constituted by its external, intersubjective world, and that it lacks an immediate grasp of this dependency.<sup>27</sup> In contrast to the aim of my work however, Roman-Lagerspetz's ambition is to unfold the philosophical relation between Hegel and Butler in its entirety, thereby focusing strongly on the separate questions of epistemology and recognition. The purpose of my work is solely to consider the relation between the two in terms of a philosophical discussion on the themes of identity, difference and subjectivity – a theme which of course involves the question of recognition, and indirectly epistemology.

A focal point of *Striving* is Alexandre Kojève's influence on Butler, an impact which is to be considered in the present study as well. With their stipulation of a closing identity in the sense of an “end of history” in the final chapter of the *PhG*, Kojève's lectures on Hegel during the 30's, collected as *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel*,<sup>28</sup> coined an interpretation of the latter thinker that is still highly influential today. According to Kojève, Hegel's *PhG* ends

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<sup>26</sup> An older work acknowledging and examining Butler's Hegelian influences is Sara Salih's *Judith Butler* (2002). Salih, too, claims that this impact of Hegel cannot be overvalued (p. 1). For a shorter but pregnant comparison of Butler, Hegel and Foucault on the question of the subject, see Holden Kelm, “Die paradoxe Struktur des Subjektbegriffs bei Hegel, Foucault und Butler”, J. Angermüller et al. (eds), *Moving (Con)Texts. Produktion und Verbreitung von Ideen in der globalen Wissensökonomie* (2011), pp. 103–117.

<sup>27</sup> Roman-Lagerspetz (2009), p. 15.

<sup>28</sup> *Introduction à la Lecture de Hegel*. Transl. from the French by J. Nichols (1980).

with the subject's recognition of itself and others as the generating forces of the world and of being. When arriving in its very essence in this respect, the subject must no longer strive for self-attainment; thus, time ceases to be, as it is no longer moved by human desire. For Roman-Lagerspetz, it is the circumstance that Kojève was the first thinker to read Hegel with a focus on the latter's philosophy of the subject in relation to his thinking on epistemology and history, that is of importance here.<sup>29</sup> Although not explicitly mentioned in Butler's works, Roman-Lagerspetz holds that Butler's continuous critique of Hegel emanates from the Kojévian lectures, demonstrated through the fact that Butler finally remains by the interpretation of Hegel as a metaphysician of closure. At the same time, the features of Hegel's thinking on the subject and identity that are sustained in her thought, are re-read by Butler from a Kojévian perspective.<sup>30</sup> Still today, Roman-Lagerspetz argues, not only Butler, but much of French theory focusing on the theme of the "self as internally multiple" draws upon this Kojévian heritage.<sup>31</sup>

Coming to the relationship between Butler and Heidegger, I have found hardly no philosophical studies on the topic, with the exception of Aret Karademir's "Butler and Heidegger. On the Relation between Freedom and Marginalization".<sup>32</sup> Karademir compares Butler's understanding of the culturally and socio-historically shared world with Heidegger's notion of being-with, finding important similarities. Yet he too pursues an understanding of freedom and identity in terms of the self-relation of the subject. Built upon this presupposition, the subject's freedom is said to be dependent on the freedom of the marginalized other.<sup>33</sup> But the relation to the other, I argue, must also be questioned in its subject-metaphysical form, confronted with the possibility that there may be another way to be with and acknowledge the other than as a subject.

Otto Pöggeler's *Der Denkweg Martin Heideggers*, first published in 1963, is one early work that pursues an interpretation of "The Principle of Identity". Here, Pöggeler shows how the logical comprehension of identity and difference in Heidegger is transformed into a question of being that essentially involves the human being as a creature that has the ability to think.<sup>34</sup>

An early work on the question of the ontological difference in Heidegger that will be consulted in this work is L.M. Vail's *Heidegger and Ontological Difference* from 1972, where

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<sup>29</sup> Roman-Lagerspetz (2009), p. 14.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 278.

<sup>32</sup> In: *Hypatia* (2014), Vol. 29 (4).

<sup>33</sup> Karademir (2014), p. 833.

<sup>34</sup> Otto Pöggeler, *Der Denkweg Martin Heideggers* (1983), pp. 145-163.

the ontological difference, upon Heidegger's own words, is treated not as a theoretical relation, but an ontological foundation allowing for human existence.<sup>35</sup> A shorter study of the ontological difference that is worth mentioning here is Richard Polt's "The Event of Entinking the Event".<sup>36</sup>

The reason why the works on identity and difference in Heidegger are few in number is partly because the topic of identity today is activated mainly as a question of the human self, thus converging with the question of the subject and of subject metaphysics. On these themes in Heidegger, there is a broad landscape of secondary literature. The question at stake is of course whether we can remain by the core philosophical insight that Heidegger attempts to communicate with the articulation of this theme, namely that human selfhood is attainable and graspable from the perspective of being. Many scholars have devoted extensive commentaries on how *Beiträge* and the whole of Heidegger's later production aims at an overcoming of the subject-object-paradigm. But the question is if we have properly comprehended what is meant by an overcoming of this kind, and what Dasein, as an alternative to this, entails?

Jean-Paul Sartre's appropriation of Heidegger's conceptualization of Dasein and existence in *SZ*, together with Heidegger's response to this interpretation in "Letter on 'Humanism' " from 1947,<sup>37</sup> and Jacques Derrida's assessment of this discord, gives a good overview of an early reception of Heidegger's conception of the human self. In his "Existentialism is a Humanism" from 1946, Sartre formulated his defence of existentialism, in which he included Heidegger's thought, in the following terms:

Our point of departure is, indeed, the subjectivity of the individual. And at the point of departure there cannot be any other truth than this, I think, therefore I am, which is the absolute truth of consciousness as it attains to itself. Every theory which begins with man, outside of this moment of self-attainment, is a theory which thereby suppresses the truth, for outside of the Cartesian cogito, all objects are no more than probable, and any doctrine of probabilities which is not attached to a truth will crumble into nothing.<sup>38</sup>

In other words, the meaning of existence for Sartre was inaccessible outside of the self-certainty of man: the point of departure could only be man's consciousness of himself as a

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<sup>35</sup> L. M. Vail, *Heidegger and Ontological Difference* (1972), p. 78.

<sup>36</sup> In: C. E. Scott et al. (eds.), *Companion to Heidegger's Contributions to Philosophy* (2001). The article encompasses the whole topic of the identity and difference of thinking and being in *Beiträge*, examined by Scott as Heidegger's response to the metaphysical conception of thinking and truth as a matter of correspondence with the real and actual.

<sup>37</sup> "Brief über den 'Humanismus' ", *Holzwege*, GA 9. Hereinafter referred to as *BH*.

<sup>38</sup> Jean-Paul Sartre, *L'existentialisme est un humanisme*. Translation from the French by P. Mairet, W. Kaufmann (ed.), *Existentialism from Dostoevsky to Sartre* (1989), p. 302.

responsible being in the world. In *BH*, Heidegger criticized this understanding with the argument that the human being as Sartre understood it not at all was the center of Heidegger's thinking. Man, for Heidegger, could only *be* himself via the relation to being.

In 1968, Derrida held a lecture entitled "The Ends of Man" (first published 1969), where he too argued that man was inseparable from the question of being in Heidegger's works, and that this thought was explicitly expressed in *BH*. Man in Heidegger was according to Derrida only apprehensible on the basis of the End of man, his own suspension. This sublation was a transition to the non-anthropological thinking of being.<sup>39</sup> But this thinking had not gotten rid of the human – rather, it was a retrieval of his essence "beyond metaphysical concepts of *humanitas*".<sup>40</sup> In other words, the essence of man was not located within man himself. With this text, Derrida had determined Heidegger's concept of Dasein as a post-metaphysical account of the human. In the wake of this interpretation, it has been generally acknowledged that post-modern thought is inspired by this radical Heideggerian questioning of the subject as the fundamental premise of philosophy.<sup>41</sup>

The question hereafter was, and still is, how to understand the philosophical meaning of this reversal of the role of man. What becomes of man if he is his own end? And can the contemporary or post-structuralist understandings of subjectivity ultimately account for a comprehension of man that is grounded in being? Sartre's misunderstanding of Heidegger highlights the complexity of this question, disclosed in the fact that the openness to being also has an existential dimension that demands human consciousness. This dimension cannot be omitted. What is at stake, is rather to interpret this condition from a new perspective, as a paradoxical gesture where man uses his human capacities to *renounce* his subjective agency in the face of being. In this gesture, his choices, ethics, values and identity no longer have the subject as a point of departure and guideline, but rather the openness and borders of being. In this respect, my stance would be a continuation of Derrida's, with the aim to develop it towards the contemporary question of identity.

This debate on the place of the human self in Heidegger has continued in recent years, with a broad field of studies not only on this question its own right, but also as attempts to inscribe Heidegger in contemporary discussions on subjectivity, identity and difference.

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<sup>39</sup> Jacques Derrida, "The Ends of Man", *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* (1969), Vol. 30 (1), p. 55.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>41</sup> See for instance Dong Hun Kim, *Subject oder Dasein* (2004), p. 6, and Elisabeth Deeds Ermarth, *Sequel to History* (1992), p. 111.

A somewhat too comprehensive book, with the ambition to cover all post-structuralist discussions on subjectivity, agency and power since the 60's, within the framework of the question of identity and difference, is the already mentioned study by Howarth. Referring to Heidegger's critical radicalization of phenomenology, he too recognizes that post-structuralist theorizing on these issues always adheres to a specific ontological framework, because all thinking of beings includes a thinking of being.<sup>42</sup> Howarth discusses *IuD* and acknowledges Heidegger's argument that we cannot think identity and difference properly as long as the grounding difference between beings and being is concealed.<sup>43</sup> But Howarth does not account for what, more specifically, the divergence between Heidegger's understanding of identity and difference, and those of the post-structural thinkers that he compares Heidegger with, would imply philosophically. Further, it is not clear what impact this insight that all thinking relates itself to being would have on the conclusion of Howarth's work, which is that the quandary of the de-centered subject of power structures and differences cannot be resolved by way of the postulation of a uniform, intellectual principle. The problem, he writes, is rooted in the shaping of social relations per se, and hence can only be mediated in view of the determined indebtedness in which it appears.<sup>44</sup> In my view, this dilemma is being-historical, meaning that it is neither eternal, nor historical in the sense that it would be created by the contingent actions and institutions of human beings. Rather, it is a manifestation of a specific constellation of the withdrawal and presence of being.

Gianni Vattimo, also drawing on Heidegger's later thought, indeed questions the assumption that the subject is the only way of being human.<sup>45</sup> According to him, the trope of the disadvantaged subject would lead the human to a new attentiveness to his finitude and to the question of being.<sup>46</sup> The decision for this reversal would however not pertain to the subject, nor being. Rather, *class* would hereafter be the "protagonist of history".<sup>47</sup> For Heidegger however, ideologies like Marxism would merely be expanded versions of the subject mode of being. Nevertheless, Heidegger's own ideological involvement with the Nazi regime is a fact, and will be discussed in chapter 6.7.

Next to these, more attentive and detailed studies on this ambiguity of the self in Heidegger are to be found. Abraham Mansbach's *Beyond Subjectivism* from 2002 is a nuanced account

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<sup>42</sup> Howarth (2013), pp. 87, 101.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 239-240.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5, 185.

<sup>45</sup> Gianni Vattimo, *Le avventure della differenza*. Transl. from the Italian by C. Blamires with the assistance of T. Harrison as *The Adventure of Difference* (1993), p. 57.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 56-58. Quotation on p. 58.

of subjectivity and identity in early Heidegger. Mansbach, too, demonstrates that Heidegger's destruction of the subject and his concept of Dasein involves two seemingly contradictory movements: one the one hand, a de-centering of the human being as subject, and on the other, the reinstatement of the importance of this being. For Mansbach however, this leaves the problem of authenticity and inauthenticity, as well as that of the split between the everyday self and the identical self, unsolved.<sup>48</sup> Michael E. Zimmerman's *Eclipse of the Self* from 1981 also recognizes this doubleness in Heidegger's Dasein, tracing it throughout Heidegger's complete corpus. With the notion of authenticity, Zimmerman suggests, Heidegger expresses the same phenomenon as in the later notions of *Gelassenheit* and *Ereignis*. What disappears in the latter are the voluntarist characterizations of this event. At the same time, a certain "courage" would remain crucial also for later Heidegger, not least in his understanding of history.<sup>49</sup>

In *Heidegger and the Subject*, Francois Raffoul adheres to the view that the question of mineness in Heidegger demonstrates the problem of authenticity and inauthenticity, and that the theme of the event and belonging-together is a transfiguration of the former dichotomy in *SZ*.<sup>50</sup> Heidegger, Raffoul argues, refuses only the interpretation of the human being as a subjectivistic creature, in order to highlight a conception of selfhood founded on a belonging to being. The dimension of subjectivity is therefore deepened rather than excluded.<sup>51</sup> Thus, "the understanding of the 'subject' as being-in-the-world, transcendence, openness to being, or ecstatic temporality does not merely continue along the lines of the Cartesian *ego*."<sup>52</sup> What is not investigated here, however, is how this relation is grounded in the ontological difference, in terms of an experience of being in which its unfamiliarity to the human existence is revealed. The exposure to being entails a friction, arising from the fact that being is never *immediately* present in its unconcealment for human existence. As we are beings, being remains an origin that is essentially beyond our human capacities and power, and it is *as* this strangeness that being must be released.

Mainly employing early Heidegger, Einar Øverenget has a similar argumentation in *Seeing the Self* (1998): Heidegger does not refuse subjectivity, but only the understanding of it as a being present-at-hand, a thing.<sup>53</sup> The objectivity of phenomenology thus consists in the recov-

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<sup>48</sup> Abraham Mansbach, *Beyond Subjectivism* (2002), p. 145.

<sup>49</sup> Michael Zimmerman, *Eclipse of the Self* (1981), p. xxx.

<sup>50</sup> Francois Raffoul, *A chaque fois mien: Heidegger et la question du sujet*. Transl. from the French by D. Pettigrew and G. Recco (2003), p. 255.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 9-10.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 209-210.

<sup>53</sup> Einar Øverenget, *Seeing the Self* (1998), p. 2.

ery of the subject position from psychologism.<sup>54</sup> In a study from 2008, Enrique Muñoz Perez, covering Heidegger's early and late thinking, also shows how Heidegger develops a new concept of the human being without centering his philosophy around it in an anthropological respect. Muñoz Perez concludes that every struggle to think the human being will find its “ground and limits” in the question of being.<sup>55</sup> In her introduction to *Beiträge*, Daniela Vallega-Neu accurately expresses what is at stake, arguing that “The question here is not one of how to break through or to open up subjectivity; it is rather—if we want to focus on human being—how human being comes to be, how it finds an articulation in the openness and groundlessness of the event of being.”<sup>56</sup>

The standpoint shared by all these works, is that they recognize a form of mirrored inversion or transformation of the kind of agency that pertains to subjectivity. The gesture of openness to being does not exclude human responsibility or activeness, but transforms the very sense of responsibility. To this conclusion, I will add a more extensive analysis of subjectivity. The purpose will be to show that openness to being, corresponding to a shattering of subjectivity, is neither to be understood as a dispersal under the power of *other* subjects, nor a “positive” constitutive openness towards these subjects, be it historically or structurally. Following Heidegger, the constituting difference in identity formation is not that between beings, but between beings and being. Thus, I will argue against a conclusion like Peter Ha's, who argues that “Heidegger wants to show firstly that the self of Dasein is never primarily regarded as an isolated self-point subject but is constituted in the co-existence with others in the world.”<sup>57</sup> This co-constitution is not in itself the opposite of subjectivism; it is not equal to the exposure to being. A genuine openness to others, my argument follows, can only unfold in the mindfulness of being, as the origin of the timespace in which human beings dwell together. So, Raffoul holds: “being is an event (a 'throw') that delivers me over to myself – not as an isolated individual, but as an openness and relation to the world, to others, and to the being that I am”.<sup>58</sup> I will show how that which we understand as a loss of agency and self-legacy today is a mere consequence of what Heidegger denotes as subject metaphysics, rather than a step towards its overcoming. The activity and passivity in relation to being is of an essentially other kind than the dialectics of subjectivity and objectivity.

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<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>55</sup> “sein Fundament und seine Grenze”, Enrique Muñoz Perez, *Der Mensch im Zentrum, aber nicht als Mensch* (2008), p. 161.

<sup>56</sup> Daniela Vallega-Neu, *Heidegger's Contributions to Philosophy: An Introduction* (2003), p. 4.

<sup>57</sup> Peter Ha, “The Problem of Intersubjectivity in Heidegger's Concept of *solus ipse*” (2004), p. 5.

<sup>58</sup> Raffoul (2003), p. 211.

An issue closely related to this is that the problem with the Cartesian understanding of subjectivity as substantiality often remains superficially assumed in the secondary literature, taken to be equal to the problem of identity and the identical, thus motivating the repudiation of the latter. As already indicated, the privilege of "difference" is likewise often assumed without a deepened discussion of the very domain of this figure. This is visible, for instance, in a recent comparison of Heidegger and Foucault (a connection which indeed will be of importance for my argumentation) on the question of the subject and its identity and difference. Ladelle McWhorter claims that Heidegger's Dasein is no essentialized entity, but through the fact of death constituted by "absence, discontinuity, cessation, passage. Dasein's deathliness is its being in history, its lack of eternity or rest in the self-same".<sup>59</sup> The understanding of Dasein in terms of care, she claims, "displaces" the substance metaphysical understanding of subjectivity. In this respect, "Dasein is an ever-non-self-identical ex-isting, 'itself' only in ever moving beyond itself". Her conclusion is that "just as subjects (and objects) are not fundamental in Foucault's thinking through the historical constitution of subjectivities, subjects and objects are not fundamental in this Heideggerian analysis of human existence". More so, this would be the case in the further course of Heidegger's thinking, where "even the Dasein-analytic loses its power and urgency".<sup>60</sup> Thus, "To think with either philosopher is to abandon oneself to movements of self-overcoming that affirm history, passage, and change above stasis and essential identity. However different they may be, these thinkers' paths converge in the nonplace of difference."<sup>61</sup> Despite the correct observation that "being is no longer thinkable in terms of objective presence, thinking is no longer an activity of the subject",<sup>62</sup> her conclusions are problematic because of the lack of a fundamental discussion of subject metaphysics as well as the metaphysics of identity. On my view, the ontological difference in Heidegger does not correspond to the dispersal of the subject as acknowledged by Foucault – rather, it forms an opposite to being's prevalence as power, constituting differences within and among subjects in the Foucauldian as well as Butlerian sense. Further, Dasein for Heidegger is not only exposed to being as a *displacing* force. Belonging-together is equally Dasein's self-arrival in and through being, its discovery of a prevailing Sameness of which it is a part. Where the identity of the subject is displaced, another sense of belonging and unity is given to Dasein.

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<sup>59</sup> Ladelle McWhorter, "Subjecting Dasein", A. Milchman and A. Rosenberg (eds.), *Foucault and Heidegger: Critical Encounters* (2003), p. 118.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

Highly essential is the question of historicity in Heidegger. In this, Hans Ruin's *Enigmatic Origins* (1994) will serve as a primary guideline. The work is devoted to the question of how the historical, finite human being can pursue the original, philosophical quest for being as that which must somehow *withstand* the force of history. In this context, Ruin also demonstrates how the problem of historicity in Heidegger in fact already encompasses the problem of intersubjectivity, although not called so by Heidegger himself.<sup>63</sup>

On the relationship between Heidegger and Hegel, there are several extensive works. One of them is Sinnerbrink's, already mentioned, which carries out a detailed reading of identity and difference in both thinkers. According to Sinnerbrink,

Hegel and Heidegger present powerful versions of the identity/difference problematic, and in doing so represent 'paradigmatic' versions of the simultaneous critique of metaphysics and critique of modernity. The connecting theme that links the identity/difference problem with the critique of metaphysics is that of achieving an adequate conception of our selfhood and freedom within the historical context of modernity.<sup>64</sup>

In his conclusion, however, he accuses Heidegger of lacking a notion commensurable with Hegel's philosophy of the intersubjectivity of spirit,<sup>65</sup> ultimately arguing that Hegel's account of difference is more applicable to the problems of modernity than Heidegger's.<sup>66</sup> Like McWorther, he finds in Heidegger an ultimate preference of unity over the ontological difference.<sup>67</sup> The meaning of unity or identity in this thinker is thus again apprehended on the basis of the place and the meaning of this concept within subject metaphysics, rather than as an attempt to invert the very logic of this paradigm.

Dennis Schmidt performs an equally close comparative reading of the two philosophers in *The Ubiquity of the Finite* from 1988, focusing on the question of metaphysics in both, however not as a matter of belonging to a static label, but in terms of the ability or inability to think finitude. Schmidt does not endorse one of them over the other, but instead acknowledges two different ways to heed the same issue. It is however not clear what this interpretation would communicate hermeneutically about the present.

The question of the domains of subjectivity, identity and difference has also remained an issue within Hegel's philosophy in its own right. A more recent work on identity and differ-

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<sup>63</sup> Hans Ruin, *Enigmatic Origins* (1994), p. 121.

<sup>64</sup> Sinnerbrink (2001), p. 258.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 259.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 259-260.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 252.

ence in Hegel is the anthology *Identity and Difference* from 2007, edited by Philip Grier. The book includes interesting views on this topic from the perspectives of gender, nation, logic and ethics, all in one way or another arguing for the presence of difference in Hegel's thinking. For example, William Maker holds that “self-sufficiency and autonomy are not attainable in isolation, by excluding or incorporating difference, but rather only by establishing and sustaining it”,<sup>68</sup> while Robert Williams states that “if there were no otherness in any sense, then there could be no transition at all, not even a tautological reiteration of the one and the same”.<sup>69</sup> As seen, then, my theme is not new. However, as many other readings of this topic, the work takes the paradigm in which it is situated for granted; it neither acknowledges nor problematizes the fact that it is mainly grounded in the explicitly anthropological and intersubjectively oriented work of Kojève. So, for instance, Grier argues that the concept of identity understood as an achievement of separation from the different, “may lead to the political demand for the simplest and crudest of solutions: driving the 'other' away through violence”.<sup>70</sup> Thus, he holds, the use and abuse of the conception of identity depends on how difference is understood. An identity where difference is a logical part of its constitution is linked to mutual recognition between human subjects.<sup>71</sup> As identity and difference are not matters of *formal* logic for Hegel, they would according to this view be a question of the identity and difference between and among human subjects.

But already in Hegel, the issue of identity and difference points towards a decentralization and dispersal of the subject as ego; contrary to Kojève's interpretation, I will demonstrate, *spirit* is that of which self-consciousness becomes conscious in mediated identity, rather than its own subjectness. For this reason, recognition must be reconsidered as a matter of recognizing spirit in the other. A primary difference for Hegel is according to this argument found in the gap between the unity of being, and the conscious and self-reflective human being. Being unfolds as a difference of which self-consciousness is the seat. It is in the light of this structure that all external difference must be understood – also, as I will demonstrate, the intersubjective one. It is when we have understood this fundamental orientation of Hegel's thought, that we can pose the question of whether or not his philosophy could finally sustain its own assumptions.

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<sup>68</sup> William Maker, “Identity, Difference, and the Logic of Otherness”, P. T. Grier (ed.), *Identity and Difference* (2007), p. 19.

<sup>69</sup> Robert Williams, “Double Transition, Dialectic, and Recognition”, *Identity and Difference* (2007), p. 41.

<sup>70</sup> Philip Grier, “Introduction”, *Identity and Difference* (2007), p. 2.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 2-3.

## Structure of the present study

Chapter one begins with an analysis of Butler's articulation of the problem of identity and difference in relation to subjectivity and power. It will be considered as a problem that displays the metaphysics of the present. Showing how her thought is rooted in a confrontation with Hegelian metaphysics, the second part of the chapter is devoted to an interpretation of the theme of identity and difference as it is presented in Hegel's *EW* and *WL*. In these works, I will show, it is interrogated as a question of the brokenness and unity of being. Through reading the works against the background and influence of Hölderlin's fragment "On judgment and Being", the purpose is to show how being for Hegel is a matter of unity beyond subjectivity and objectivity.

Chapter two turns to Hegel's *PhG* and examines how the problem of identity and difference takes place in a historical, intersubjective world; identity, it is shown, is thought both as an inward, personal unity, as well as an outward, collective one, holding the entirety of the dialectics of world history within itself. It is demonstrated how the notion of spirit replaces being and displaces self-consciousness: self-conscious being is spirit, whereby self-consciousness must lose its reference to an immediate "self".

In chapter three, I return to Butler's account of identity, difference and subjectivity, emphasizing it as a confrontation with Hegel's subject metaphysics through an adaptation of Kojève's lectures. For Butler, while subjectivity is the foundation of identity, its dispersal in a multiplicity of different subjects finally excludes the possibility of identity as unity, internal as well as historical. The concept of power is discussed as central to this thought, and is examined in its Foucauldian roots. In Butler's reworking of the concept, power is understood both as that which creates the identity of a subject, and that which defies the same identity.

Chapter four concentrates on Heidegger and his *SZ*, unfolding how the major work takes on the problem of identity through the concept of authenticity, obtained in terms of *Augenblick*. *Augenblick*, or "the moment of vision" is a concept denoting the temporal dimension in which the facticity and existentiality of human existence contracts in a sense that allows Dasein to identify with the very ek-static character of its existence, or the wholeness of its being, rather than the various beings within the world. The chapter ends with a problematization of the compatibility of the accounts of temporality and historicity in the work, showing how this inconsistency leads Heidegger towards a new understanding of being and Dasein, that also affects his understanding of identity. Heidegger's position is compared with Butler's, the intention being to interrogate in what way she and Heidegger encounters the same prob-

lem when understanding identity against the background of sociality and historicity, and their different presuppositions and conclusions on the matter.

Chapter five concentrates on Heidegger's turn as a matter of a re-orientation where Dasein suddenly is understood as the place for being's manifestation of itself through the human being, a manifestation unfolding as an epochal historicity of being on the collective level. The human must learn to appropriate being as a unity/Sameness and simultaneous twofold of itself and being, a thought emerging from Heidegger's interpretation of Parmenides. Further, it is argued that distress is the mode of being in which being can be appropriated as this Sameness in the present epoch.

Chapter six begins with an interpretation of Heidegger's critical appropriation of Hegel on the themes of the present study, showing how the problem with Hegel's philosophy according to Heidegger is found in an oblivion of the finitude of authentic belonging. This forgetting leads to a situation where the subject on the one hand can be viewed as encompassing and absorbing everything external in an infinite and eternal identity, while at the same time itself being absorbed and devoured by this externality. In the context of this, I formulate a Heideggerian response to Butler's quandary, with the argument that the origin of the contemporary understanding of identity articulated by her is rooted in the consolidation of subject metaphysics, transforming being into manifestations of power. The chapter ends with a comment on Heidegger's antisemitism in relation to his thought on power and machination, taking the so-called *Black Notebooks* (*Schwarze Hefte*) into account.

Chapter seven preserves the hermeneutical point of departure employed in the work hitherto, but now to develop an account of identity and difference in Heidegger's thinking in its own right. For Heidegger, I will show, belonging-together implies a mode of existence where being is approached in a holding out of being. In other words, it is in an active enduring of the ontological difference that the human and being can be revealed in their oneness. I conclude the chapter by showing how this entails an identity that unfolds inwards as well as outwards, taking place in history as well as in the individual.

## Chapter One. Identity as a historical and ontological problem in Butler and Hegel

### 1. Butler and Benhabib: identifying a contemporary situation

In September 1990, the Greater Philadelphia Philosophy Consortium organized a symposium with Judith Butler, Seyla Benhabib and Nancy Fraser, three feminist theorists with different backgrounds in continental philosophy. In focus was a dialogue between Benhabib and Butler on the relation between feminism and a set of theories given the umbrella term “postmodernism” – theories which according to Benhabib ranged from Nietzsche and Heidegger, to Lyotard, Derrida and Foucault.<sup>72</sup> A central issue for this theoretical and many times political movement was in Benhabib's view the trope of “the death of man”.<sup>73</sup> Benhabib's concern was the means by which postmodernism on the basis of this figure questioned the metaphysical conception of the human being as a coherent, universal and self-reflexive subject. Within this movement, the subject was highlighted in its historical contingency, and from a postmodern feminist perspective, its masculine traits were recognized. It was dismantled as an excluding conception, lacking the universal status that it had ascribed to itself. Yet the task of feminism, Benhabib argued, should be to re-articulate this subject towards a true universality. It is by continuing to claim subjectivity, that feminists could pursue the strive for selfhood, agency and autonomy. If feminism refused the subject as a category altogether, it risked this endeavour. Benhabib held that while the subject must be deconstructed as situated in a linguistic and historical context, it still has to be apprehended in terms of something above and more than this context, as a position from which human beings are able to *reflect* on the contexts and structures in question. From this distance of reflection, they would be able to pursue an independent and alternative relation to their own historical situation. Only in reference to this capacity, could the impetus to liberate women from oppressing, historical structures of power be graspable at all.<sup>74</sup>

In her then newly published work *GT*, Butler had claimed that not only gender roles were ascribed to the subject since its birth, but sex itself. The novel aspect of this account was her statement that the categories of sex were not attributed to a pre-social and pre-historical subject, but were meant to create this subject as such, making it an always already situated being.

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<sup>72</sup> Seyla Benhabib, “Feminism and Postmodernism: An Uneasy Alliance”, *Feminist Contentions* (1995), pp. 21-24.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 21.

Hence, a liberation from and alternation of these structures and categories was only possible as a modification of them, rather than a rejection. Behind these was no true subject or self to be found, but the truth of oneself was something to be enacted within their limits, as their immanent transformation. According to Butler, the feminist subject was therefore highly problematic:

It is not enough to inquire into how women might become more fully represented in language and politics. Feminist critique ought also to understand how the category of “women”, the subject of feminism, is produced and restrained by the very structures of power through which emancipation is sought. Indeed, the question of women as the subject of feminism raises the possibility that there may not be a subject who stands “before” the law, awaiting representation in or by the law. Perhaps the subject, as well as the invocation of a temporal “before”, is constituted by the law as the fictive foundation of its own claim to legitimacy.<sup>75</sup>

Since the subject was historical, this transformation was “*historical work*”,<sup>76</sup> a matter of responding to and being in history. For this reason, there was no safeguarded, a-temporal position for the subject to claim. Language, the given “tool” for alterations, was something inherited.<sup>77</sup> The subject thus remained a central concept for Butler, but only in this historical, constructed respect. Citing Nietzsche in one of his critical aphorisms on substance metaphysics, Butler claimed that there was no “'doer' behind the deed”.<sup>78</sup>

For Benhabib, Butler's thinking embodied a complete refusal of subjectivity, and thus a profound loss of orientation in feminism – rather than calling it into question, it merely confirmed the female subject's subjugation to the structures of power which it had not itself generated.<sup>79</sup> According to Benhabib, Butler failed to give a satisfying answer to the following question: If impossible to liberate oneself from the structures that frame the own subject, if a profound alteration is unthinkable, how could one still claim to pursue an enlarged field of agency, for women or for the human subject as such? From where could one possibly reflect on the given situation, if merely being its outcome? How could one uncover one's freedom, and thus oneself, if one is always the product of history as power?

The question of being a self in a qualified respect, as the possibility of attaining oneself through a universal, a definition, a category or an articulated belonging, revealed in what

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<sup>75</sup> *GT*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>76</sup> Butler (1995a), p. 136.

<sup>77</sup> *GT*, p. 199.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 34-35. See Friedrich Nietzsche, *Zur Genealogie der Moral, Sämtliche Werke. Bd. 5* (1980), ¶ 1:13.

<sup>79</sup> Benhabib (1995), p. 21.

sense the question of *identity* was at stake here. It was not only being discussed in terms of the universal categories of gender, but the core issue was the possibility of selfhood, both in a social and personal respect. Identity was understood not as a matter of a static self-definition, as in the case with things or objects being assigned a set of characteristics.<sup>80</sup> The underlying premise was instead identity's status of enactment, the fact that it appeared to involve an activity or an act in the world performed by a self. An act in this respect could also mean the act of claiming or thinking – all acts of definition. As Hegel had stated in his *WL*, identity as a belonging to oneself is something that presupposes a transition between two states, an appropriation of something, and hence a *differing* from oneself. Rather than being a present fact found, it entails a relating of something to something – an act of reflection.<sup>81</sup>

While for Benhabib the subject accomplished identity in a mirroring between acts and categories in the external world on the one hand, and the pre-given intentionality of the subject on the other, for Butler, identity occurred as the subject's conception of itself in an individual configuration of the structures of power. Identity in the sense of an attainment of oneself was therefore possible as an appropriation and manifestation of power. Precisely for this reason, it must be apprehended as a ceaseless self-differing. The condition of identity was an irreconcilable difference pertaining to the subject. The structures or categories of identity through which personal identity was unfolded already belonged to a (historical) other, and the subject in its search for itself could therefore never uncover an original oneness.

Is this situation to be grasped as an ontological or a historical predicament? Does it signify an end to subject metaphysics – or is subject metaphysics rather the place from which to comprehend it? What is its very origin? Although not inaugurating it, the polemic between Benhabib and Butler brought out a tension inherent in the trope of identity which until today has permeated nearly all its conceptualizations within continental philosophy, not only gender theory. But it is within the latter field that it has been particularly visible, as the articulation of an increased experience of an absence of *measure* within identity formation. Answers to the question of what kind of identities and acts that could be regarded as subversive expressions of agency, and which of them that are merely superimposed sediments of alienating historical structures, are missing. For instance, is a passionate and conscious attachment to a stereotypical gender identity to be regarded as liberating because of the attachment, or are there identi-

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<sup>80</sup> Although the words "selfhood" and "identity" often are used interchangeably, I will, when allowed by the context, use the term identity. The main reason is the argument that will be unfolded in this work, namely that identity, while essentially involving what we call the self, at the same time is a mode of being that *surpasses* this self.

<sup>81</sup> *WL II*, pp. 41, 47.

ties which somehow are preferable in themselves? While Benhabib both addressed the necessity of an objective, normative ethics and maintained a liberal view on freedom, Butler in many ways completed the growing theoretical feminist emphasis on the constructedness and subjectiveness of all identities. The present situation can be captured in the transition from Benhabib's to Butler's perspective, the latter today influencing a range of schools within and outside gender theory. For this reason, the task of this work is to address in what way Butler captures a significant trait of a modern experience of identity.

We can begin by asking a descriptive question: what is a subject? What does it mean to be one? The word stems from a Latin translation of the Greek term ὑποκείμενον, literary meaning “that which underlies a thing”, bearing and gathering its accidental characteristics and transitions. The post-Kantian subject is however no longer comprehended as a substrate, but, as Günter Figal holds, as “the possibility and reality of perception and thought and thus of the perceptible and thinkable *objects* as well”.<sup>82</sup> In modern philosophy, subjectivity is the correlate of objectivity. There is only a subject in so far as it relates itself to an object, an object which cannot be reduced to a quality or property of the subject. None of them is ontologically independent.<sup>83</sup>

How, then, could the concept of the subject be transformed and preserved beyond its foundational sense of being a ground? What is this experience of no longer being the foundation of the own identity, and yet adhering to an understanding of identity as the subject's attainment of itself? And can there be a form of identity beyond subjectivity? These are the questions that will guide the present work.

## 2. Butler's Hegelianism

Butler's theory on identity and subjectivity will partly be read as a philosophical confrontation with Hegel's philosophy. In the 1998 preface to *SD*, Butler writes that all of her works are centered around an array of Hegelian themes, including the bond between recognition and desire, subjectivity and otherness.<sup>84</sup> Her theories can be added to a long tradition of philosophical critique on the theme of identity in Hegel. In a way, this tradition runs parallel to and even converges with the dismantling of the whole of metaphysics, as the latter's orientation towards an all-including identity in many respects reaches its culmination in Hegelian philos-

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<sup>82</sup> “die Möglichkeit und Wirklichkeit des Wahrnehmens und Denkens und damit auch der wahrnehmbaren und denkbaren *Objekte*”, Günter Figal, *Verstehensfragen* (2009), p. 248.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 249.

<sup>84</sup> *SD*, p. xiv.

ophy. Often, difference is held to be disregarded by Hegel, but there are also many accounts that rehabilitate divergence in his thinking. I will demonstrate how Butler's criticism of Hegel on this point is inspired exactly by him and his notion of an "ek-stasis" of the self.<sup>85</sup> Therefore, her apprehension of identity could perhaps be characterized as a Hegelian re-configuration of identity in Hegel, disclosing how something in his account of this theme is destined to turn itself inside out.

But the aim of *SD* is also to show how Hegel's *own* immanent critique of the self-identical subject in many ways is disregarded by contemporary critics of his philosophy. Hegel, Butler concludes, is not easily overcome, precisely as the wide notion of an ek-static subject from the beginning is derived from his theories.<sup>86</sup>

The cornerstones of Butler's engagement with Hegel are also manifested in *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality*, a collaborate work from 2000 written together with Slavoj Žižek and Ernesto Laclau.<sup>87</sup> Here, the question of identity is discussed within a philosophic-political framework centered around the themes given in the title.

The Hegelian apprehension of universality captures identity as a state of allness encompassing all subjects in their individuality and historicity – the entirety of the world in both a temporal and spatial respect. However, this universality is grasped speculatively, meaning that it is not something *beyond* individuality and particularity, but altogether *determined* by these. Universality is therefore the allness of all possible multiplicity.

In her contributions in *CHU*, Butler posed the question of how this could be possible. What is released if universality *is* particularity and individuality, if perpetual ruptures and modifications constitute its essence? What this condition entails is not harmony, but a permanent antagonism:

Although it may seem that Hegel is working towards a true and all-inclusive universality, this is not the case. Rather, what he offers is a view of universality that is inseparable from its founding negations. The all-encompassing trajectory of the term is necessarily undone by the exclusion of particularity on which it rests. There is no way to bring the excluded particularity into the universal without first negating that particularity. And that negation would only confirm once again that universality cannot proceed without destroying that which it purports to include. Moreover, the assimilation of the particular into the universal leaves its trace, an unassimilable reminder, which renders universality ghostly to itself.<sup>88</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> *UG*, pp. 145, 148.

<sup>86</sup> *SD*, pp. 175-176.

<sup>87</sup> Henceforth referred to as *CHU*.

<sup>88</sup> *CHU*, p. 24.

In Butler's view, this captures the content of the Hegelian assertion that "The propositional sense of the copula must be replaced with the speculative one."<sup>89</sup> Put differently, Butler contends that the speculative copula in fact does not settle anything, but destabilizes the relations constituting identity. Not only does it disrupt, but it generates an aporia: there can only be universality in so far as it ejects particularity – but as it must include particularity in order to be true universality, it is already challenged and destroyed by it.

What Butler implies, is that the belonging to an absolute universality is unattainable to the subject, as this identity already includes *other* subjectivities. Universality in this respect is never an empty equilibrium, but is continuously redefined by subjectivity as such, and thus cannot remain identical. On the basis of *itself*, the concept of the absolute appears to invert itself. Metaphysical identity cannot withstand the finitude that it includes.

Therefore, as she argues in *SD*, the notion of difference in Hegel is not correctly comprehended if it is grasped as "contained within or by the subject", but "Rather, the moment of its [the subject's] 'resolution' is finally indistinguishable from the moment of its dispersion."<sup>90</sup> The lack of a static identity of the world or allness is in other words mirrored in the failure of personal identity in the subject. To strive for a completed subjectivity, is to lose its grounding sense.

This, however, did not mean that Butler rejected the category of identity. In *GT*, she clearly demonstrates that identity not merely remains a strive on the part of the subject, as its way to attain itself, but that this task is possible by means of the appropriation of universality in the form of particularities, in this case the duality of gender. These do not merely eclipse possibilities to be, but equally *open up* modes of belonging. They are prerequisites for creating new outlooks on the things as well as on themselves, and hence for the formation of new identities. For instance, Butler argued, being ascribed the gender "woman" may exclude genders of which we have no concept, but the existence of the term in question also enables the possibility of immanent change, of alteration of its content.<sup>91</sup> Identity categories subject us, but they also let us become subjects.

But in what respect is this predicament, challenging the ground of metaphysics, itself an ontological concern rather than a political one? The answer, I argue, is suggested in the quotations above. The Hegelian unification of universality and individuality through particularity,

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<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>90</sup> *SD*, p. xv.

<sup>91</sup> See *GT*, pp. 23, 44, and 201.

is a matter of the *speculative copula*, the verb “is” binding together universality with individuality and particularity. For Butler, this copula is equally the binding force of the identity formation of the individual, as this uses universal but particularized categories to define what it is as an individual, and thereby, reversely, redefining the category in question. But the “is” in its *ontological* meaning, as a conjugation of *being itself*, is left unconsidered by her. Yet, as will be shown, what her texts implicitly reveal, is that being is the essential center around which the paradoxes of identity revolve.

The next step of the investigation is therefore to turn to Hegel himself, to examine why and how the bond of the copula is established in this context, and to demonstrate how the metaphysical conception of identity as allness from the beginning is intertwined with the question of the identity of the I. The question is: from where does the anticipation and experience of identity arise, and how is it, from the very beginning, broken by a difference?

### **3. Identity and difference in Hegel’s *Science of Logic***

When the theme of identity is investigated in Hegel, which of its aspects should be considered primarily? Logical identity, the identity of the world or allness, or personal identity? In the following, I will argue that all of these aspects are linked together, that his most important contribution to this theme is an account of the primary, ontological conflation of them. According to him, the law of identity is grounded ontologically in the encompassing unity of being – but this unity, in turn, is conditioned by the articulation and strive for identity on the part of the human being. Being a *speculative* condition however, the search for identity in human life is reversely conditioned and led by the presentiment of being's unity.

Rendering Hegel's account of identity, the proper starting point would therefore be the inherent logic and dynamic of being itself, developing and differentiating itself in the respect above. The question of a mediation between the law of identity as  $A=A$  on the one hand, and as  $I=I$  on the other, is associated with German idealism in general. But as will be shown in this chapter, it is Hegel specifically that would present how both formulas are deficient expressions of the essence of identity.

In an important subchapter of the second division of *EW*, the presumably formal law of identity is interrogated as an ontological problem. Hegel’s argumentation in this section proceeds from the question of how something like essence can be reflected and determined in the

first place. Essence, as the essence of being – “being that has gone *into itself*”,<sup>92</sup> – implies the unification of manifoldness, the uncovering of a universality or a common, unifying law underlying that which is. Therefore, the first characterization of essence to be considered is identity. As Christopher Yeomans notices, the analysis of identity in this work is never a treatment of the formal notion of identity, but from the beginning a response to the question of what essence in truth is.<sup>93</sup>

The law of identity is analyzed by Hegel in its positive form “A = A”<sup>94</sup> as well as in its negative; “A cannot be A and not-A at the same time”.<sup>95</sup> This law intends to be a pure statement of identity in the most primordial sense of the word: as a state of being where only oneness prevails and internal difference is excluded. But according to Hegel, the very propositional form of the law discloses that although identity was the intent, A does not appear once, but is doubled in order to be brought out as one: it is broken by an internal differentiation.<sup>96</sup> The distinction prevailing within this law is a question of a necessary, indispensable negation of the A, through which the A can be brought out as itself.

Following Hegel, it is not just the case that the articulation of this law reveals negation as a bearing fact. Articulation, reflection as such, is simultaneously that which first enacts this difference, this negativity within identity. Identity prevails because it is reflected as a law. Expressed in Hegelian terms, the law cannot merely be understood as an analytic observation of the identical, but must equally be viewed as a synthetic, active recovery of it, established in the act of reflection. For this reason, the synthesis cannot remain a pure unification, but is likewise a differentiation in which something is related to something, identified as something, namely to and as itself.<sup>97</sup> Because the A is brought to light in reflection only, it is primordially and inevitably broken: “Identity, instead of being in itself the truth and the absolute truth, is thus rather the opposite; instead of being the unmoved simple, it surpasses itself into the dis-

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<sup>92</sup> “das *in sich* gegangene Sein ist”, *EW*, ¶ 112, p. 231. I will follow K. Brinkmann’s and D. O. Dahlstrom’s 2010 translation of *EW*, hereinafter referred to as *EL*. Here p. 173. The paragraph numbers in the translation consistently correspond to the paragraph numbers in the German edition.

<sup>93</sup> Christopher Yeomans, “Identity as a Process of Self-Determination in Hegel’s *Logic*”, *Identity and Difference* (2007), p. 63.

<sup>94</sup> *WL II*, p. 41.

<sup>95</sup> “A kann nicht zugleich A und nicht A sein”, *WL II*, p. 36. I will follow G. di Giovanni’s 2010 translation of the complete *WL*, hereinafter referred to as *SL*. Here p. 360.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45. [*SL*, p. 360].

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45. [p. 360].

solution of itself.”<sup>98</sup> Unity is posited, and then immediately repelled from itself.<sup>99</sup> In other words, “in the expression of identity, difference also immediately emerges”.<sup>100</sup>

Accordingly, Hegel states that the law of identity taken in its formal, logical form is nothing but an “abstract” identity, an addition of a predicate to a subject without consideration of its content and form.<sup>101</sup> The law fails to unveil the actuality and truth of identity, an unveiling that would require an integration of the problem of the reflecting movement.<sup>102</sup> It is in this respect that identity would have to account for its internal non-identity.

Reflection, however, must be accounted for as an activity that involves the human being and its mind. In *EW*, Hegel states: “Since in thinking things over their true nature emerges and since this thinking is just as much *my* activity, that true nature is equally the *product of my* spirit insofar as the latter is a thinking subject.”<sup>103</sup> Thus, an equivocalness is found in the concept of reflection, vital to its meaning. Reflection denotes the light of essence as it mirrors itself in human thought, shining in the articulation of the human mind. But it also denotes the activity of thought itself, gathering and bringing the manifold (back) into the light of its essence. Although the function of consciousness in reflection is not yet unfolded at this stage,<sup>104</sup> this is what is anticipated here. As a reflecting, conscious being, the human strives to articulate that which prevails beyond the manifold of differentiated appearances; the inner universal principle of things, governing their particularity. “Thus, the I is, so to speak, the melting pot and the fire by which the indifferent manifoldness is consumed and reduced to unity.”<sup>105</sup> But reflection is not first created by the thinking mind; it is being that reflects *itself* in this way.<sup>106</sup> In reflection, being bends itself towards itself, thus, as it were, folding itself. It is in this fold that consciousness emerges. But being can only return into itself from its dispersal in manifoldness, when we, on the part of our reflection, draw ourselves back from our immediate relationship to the things, and recollect their essential light back to being.

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<sup>98</sup> “Die Identität, statt an ihr die Wahrheit und absolute Wahrheit zu sein, ist daher vielmehr das Gegenteil; statt das unbewegte Einfache zu sein, ist sie das Hinausgehen über sich in die Auflösung ihrer selbst.”, *Ibid.*, p. 44. [p. 360].

<sup>99</sup> *EW*, ¶ 116.

<sup>100</sup> “in dem Ausdrücke der Identität auch unmittelbar die Verschiedenheit vorkommt”, *WL II*, pp. 44-45. [*SL*, p. 360].

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40.

<sup>102</sup> *WL I*, p. 16.

<sup>103</sup> “Indem im Nachdenken ebensowohl die wahrhaft Natur zum Vorschein kommt, als dies Denken *meine* Tätigkeit ist, so ist jene ebensowohl das *Erzeugnis meines* Geistes, und zwar als denkenden Subjekts”, *EW*, ¶ 23, p. 80. [*EL*, p. 57].

<sup>104</sup> *WL II*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>105</sup> “Ich ist somit gleichsam der Schmelztiegel und das Feuer, wodurch die gleichgültige Mannigfaltigkeit verzehrt und auf Einheit reduziert wird.”, *EW*, ¶ 42, p. 118. [*EL*, p. 86].

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 112.

If Hegel's objections to the law of identity are properly understood, a reassessment of the statement of difference also follows logically. We cannot posit the difference of essence as an *independent* alternative to identity, because the differentiation of something from something implies that the two have already been considered with regard to their identity or unity.<sup>107</sup> This perspective on difference ought to restrain us from understanding essence as a metaphysical residue that philosophy after Hegel can do away with – for to consider or reflect something in the broadest sense thinkable, is inevitably to consider its essence, and not merely its particularity. Further, the comparison of two things can only be developed on the basis of a common, be it implicit and unseen, ground. From the perspective of logic then, these writings of Hegel powerfully develop the argument that there is nothing which is not permeated by the strive for identity, *and* the establishment of difference.

What then, would the enactment of true identity imply, viewed in terms of identity's incorporation of the act of reflection within itself, if this essentially involves the consciousness of the human being – a consciousness equally defined by its differentiation of the identical? How can this consciousness recall being to itself? How does the logic of identity and difference manifest itself from the perspective of the life and existentiality of this being?

From the perspective of thought, reflection is a pursuit of the universal essence that encompasses individual entities. But thought also strives towards differentiation and distinction of the unified; something can only be distinguished, only be identified, when regarded in its individuality and particularity as well, not merely its universality.

According to Hegel, the broader cognitive function which includes both these movements, is judgment, as the assertion of the being of something in the widest sense thinkable. In *EW* and *WL*, this capacity is therefore regarded in its ontological function and significance. In the former work, Hegel states: "For this very reason, the judgment is the true *particularity* of the concept, since it is the determinacy or differentiation of the same, a differentiation that, however, remains the universality."; "The copula 'is' comes from the concept's nature, namely, to be *identical* with itself in its externalization."<sup>108</sup> But what exactly is the notion or the concept in Hegelian thinking? Hegel refers to it both as "something that dwells within the things

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<sup>107</sup> *WL II*, pp. 52-55.

<sup>108</sup> "Das Urteil ist deswegen erst die wahrhafte *Besonderheit* des Begriffs, den es ist die Bestimmtheit oder Unterscheidung desselben, welche aber *Allgemeinheit* bleibt."; "Die Kopula 'ist' kommt von der Natur des Begriffs, in seiner Entäußerung *identisch* mit sich zu sein.", *EW I*, ¶ 166, p. 317. [*EL*, p. 241]. The primary form of judgment according to Hegel is " 'the *individual* is the *universal*' " (" 'das *Einzelne* ist das *Allgemeine*' "), and its subsequent forms " 'the *particular* is the *universal*' " (" 'das *Besondere* ist das *Allgemeine*' ") and " 'the *individual* is the *particular*' " (" 'das *Einzelne* ist das *Besondere*' "), *Ibid.*, pp. 316-317. [p. 241].

themselves”,<sup>109</sup> and as the “*truth of being and essence*”.<sup>110</sup> It must be understood as the *act* of grasping (*begreifen*) the innermost structure of things, and as this structure in itself, insofar as it is grasped. The concept is the self-actualizing inner constitution of reality, or reality reflecting itself in this twofold direction of universality towards individuality, and individuality towards universality. What Hegel here tries to articulate, is that while judgment carries out the development of the concept, it at the same time also the seat of negativity as a power that destroys unity. But how, more precisely, and from where, does it obtain its force?

#### 4. Hegel and the influence of Hölderlin’s “On Judgment and Being”

To further explore the meaning of judgment in being as well as in human consciousness, I will employ a perspective on the foundations of Hegel's thinking that hitherto has not been treated at the length that it deserves. This perspective is the influence of Friedrich Hölderlin, and more precisely his short manuscript “On Judgment and Being” (“Über Urtheil und Seyn”), written 1795 but first published 1961. Several interpreters have already uncovered the ground of this Hölderlinian impact on Hegel – Terry Pinkard, for example, calls the influence “explosive” – and my reading will be based on these publications.<sup>111</sup> However, there are no extensive and detailed thematic considerations of Hegel's works based on this manuscript yet. Due to the condensed style of Hölderlin’s fragment, its most important sections will be quoted in their entirety:

[1] *Being [Seyn]* --- expresses the joining [*Verbindung*] of Subject and Object.

Where Subject and Object are absolutely, not just partially united [*vereiniget*], and hence so united that no division can be undertaken, without destroying the essence [*Wesen*] of the thing that is to be sundered [*getrennt*], there and not otherwise can we talk of an absolute being, as is the case in intellectual intuition.

<sup>109</sup> “das den Dingen selbst Innewohnende”, *Ibid.*, p. 318. [p. 242].

<sup>110</sup> “die *Wahrheit des Seins und des Wesens*”, *Ibid.*, ¶ 159, p. 304. [p. 231].

<sup>111</sup> Terry Pinkard, *Hegel: A Biography* (2000), p. 135. Pinkard’s study covers a general analysis of Hegel's works from the perspective of “On Judgment and Being”, see pp. 133-136, 170-171, 182-186 and 342-345. One of the first texts to consider Hölderlin's philosophical influence on Hegel was Dieter Henrich's “Hegel und Hölderlin”, *Hegel im Kontext* (2010), first published 1971, pp. 9-40. Another prominent, recent work on this subject is Pini Ifergan’s *Hegel's Discovery of the Philosophy of Spirit* (2014). Ifergan examines Hölderlin's impact on Hegel's Jena Lectures, and carries out an interesting analysis of the theme of identity, being and judgment in Hölderlin's *Hyperion*. Other works shortly mentioning this specific connection between Hegel and Hölderlin is Jeffrey Reid's *Real Words* (2007), pp. 23-28; T. Rajan and A. Plotnitsky (eds.), *Idealism without absolutes* (2004), pp. 74-75; Allen Speight, *The philosophy of Hegel* (2008), pp. 10, 15, 16, 19, 48, 63, and Franco Cirulli, *Hegel's Critique of Essence* (2006), pp. 54-55. Interpretations concentrating on Hölderlin's manuscript in its own right are found in Dieter Henrich's *Konstellationen* (1991) and Edward Kanterian's lecture *Hölderlin's Metaphysics*, held at Aesthetics Research Group, School of Arts, University of Kent, November 2012.

But this Being must not be equated [*verwechselt*] with Identity. When I say: I am I, the Subject (Ego) and the Object (Ego) are not so united that absolutely no sundering can be undertaken, without destroying the essence of the thing that is to be sundered; on the contrary the Ego is only possible through this sundering of Ego from Ego. How can I say 'I' without self-consciousness? But how is self-consciousness possible? Precisely because I oppose myself to myself; I sunder myself from myself, but in spite of this sundering I recognize myself as the same in the opposites. But how far as the same? I can raise this question and I must; for in another respect [*Rücksicht*] it <i.e. the Ego> is opposed to itself. So identity is not a uniting of Subject and Object that takes place absolutely, and so Identity is not equal to absolute Being.

[2] *Judgement*: is in the highest and strictest sense the original sundering of Subject and Object most intimately united in intellectual intuition, the very sundering which first makes Object and Subject possible, the *Ur-Theilung*. In the concept of division [*Theilung*] there lies already the concept of the reciprocal relation [*Beziehung*] of Object and Subject to one another, and the necessary presupposition of a whole of which Object and Subject are the parts. 'I am I' is the most appropriate example for this concept of *Urtheilung*, it [the ego] posits itself as opposed to the *Non-ego*, not to itself. [...] <sup>112</sup> (All brackets except last in original.)

The text is grounded in a distinction that Hölderlin makes between being in the sense of “joining”, and identity. They are told to be separate things, but why and in what sense? Hölderlin's logic here proceeds from the inversion of the law of identity into the statement, the *judgment*, “I am I” – into personal identity. I will return to this association in short. Identity, he shows, presupposes a self-reflective consciousness. In stating that 'I am this 'I', the ego articulates an

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<sup>112</sup> “*Seyn* – drückt die Verbindung des Subjects und Objects aus.

Wo Subject und Object schlechthin, nicht nur zum Theil vereinigt ist, mithin so vereinigt, daß gar keine Theilung vorgenommen werden kan, ohne das Wesen desjenigen, was getrennt werden soll, zu verletzen, da und sonst nirgends kann von einem *Seyn schlechthin* die Rede seyn, wie es bei der intellectualen Anschauung der Fall ist. Aber dieses Seyn muß nicht mit der Identität verwechselt werden. Wenn ich sage: Ich bin Ich, so ist das Subject (Ich) und das Object (Ich) nicht so vereinigt, daß gar keine Trennung vorgenommen werden kann, ohne, das Wesen desjenigen, was getrennt werden soll, zu verletzen; im Gegenteil das Ich ist nur durch diese Trennung des Ichs vom Ich möglich. Wie kann ich sagen: Ich! ohne Selbstbewußtseyn? Wie ist aber Selbstbewußtseyn möglich? Dadurch daß ich mich mir selbst entgegenseze, mich von mir selbst trenne, aber ungeachtet dieser Trennung mich im entgegengesetzten als dasselbe erkenne. Aber inwieferne als dasselbe? Ich kann, ich muß so fragen; denn in einer andern Rücksicht ist es sich entgegengesetzt. Also ist die Identität keine Vereinigung des Objects und Subjects, die schlechthin stattfände, also ist die Identität nicht = dem absoluten Seyn.

*Urtheil*. ist im höchsten und strengsten Sinn die ursprüngliche Trennung des in der intellectualen Anschauung innigst vereinigten Objects und Subjects, diejenige Trennung, wodurch erst Object und Subject möglich wird, die *Ur=Theilung*. Im Begriffe der Theilung liegt schon der Begriff der gegenseitigen Beziehung des Objects und Subjects aufeinander, und die nothwendige Voraussetzung eines Ganzen wovon Object und Subject die Theile sind. ‘Ich bin Ich’ ist das passendste Beispiel zu diesem Begriffe der Urtheilung, als *Theoretischer Urtheilung*, denn in der praktischen Urtheilung sezt es sich dem *Nichtich*, nicht *sich selbst* entgegen. [...]”, Friedrich Hölderlin, “Über Urtheil und Seyn”, *Sämliche Werke. Große Stuttgarter Ausgabe. Bd. 4: Der Tod des Empedokles* (1972), pp. 216-217. English translation by H. S. Harris, Henry Silton Harris, *Hegel's Development* (1972), pp. 515–516.

awareness of, and thus oneness with, itself. In my capacity as self-consciousness subject, I relate to myself as a separate, distinct and objective entity in the world. In other words, I reflect myself as both a discrete and a unified being. However, this implies that the relation between subject and predicate within the I simultaneously is the *division* of consciousness into a subject and an object. Therefore, the statement of self-identity is the attempt to unify the self-perceiving aspect of consciousness (subject) and the perceived aspect of it (object) to a mode of being where they coincide.

For this reason, self-consciousness does not merely *make* this judgment of identity, but *is* judgment itself (*Urtheilung*). Hölderlin here emphasizes an assumed etymology of the word *Urtheil* or *Urteil* (judgment) in *Ur-theilung*, meaning arch-separation or primordial separation. This etymology has been proven wrong, but the philosophical point is not really affected by this. Phenomenologically, the pronunciation of identity, its very establishment, has already acted out the subject-object-division that was to be overcome. In thinking or considering itself, in relating itself to itself as a self-consciousness, the I is the relation of a subject to its object, and for this reason a separation.

Therefore, identity is not equal to the absolute, unbroken unity of being, as consciousness lacks the power to posit the latter. As Pinkard explains, “Neither the 'subject' nor the 'object' has any 'original' determinateness on its own that would serve to ground or establish the determinateness of the other.”<sup>113</sup> Still, the self-positing of consciousness inevitably refers to something more fundamental than itself and its division, as its uttermost intentionality is the unity of being, where subject and object are inseparable. As this more fundamental dimension, Kanterian argues, the unity of being indicates itself in the “is” of the copula. Therefore, being is that which enables the division of judgment, and for this reason judgment itself must be considered as an ontological matter.<sup>114</sup> It is thereby demonstrated that identity not merely is a logical problem, but an ontological. The manuscript reveals how being both grounds the possibility of identity, and is sundered and veiled by the strive of the latter. The I lacks an immediate access to its unity, while this unity at the same time constitutes the aim of its judging activity. In one and the same postulate, self-consciousness both asserts its own diremption, and attempts to surpass it. In accordance with this, Kanterian speaks of two different

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<sup>113</sup> Pinkard (2000), p. 135.

<sup>114</sup> Kanterian (2012).

urges defining the human being within Hölderlin's account; the strive for “boundless activity” and the strive for self-limitation.<sup>115</sup>

How does this twofold strive express itself in the concrete human mode of being? A plausible interpretation, I would suggest, is that every endeavor to abide actively in the world ultimately is an attempt to accomplish oneness with oneself, to unfold that which constitutes the most own of one's being. As the human is an entity among others, its self-determination is dependent upon its relation to the objective world, to those distinct entities which are perceived to be separated from its individual self. The condition of oneness is a differentiation played out in the world, as the various relations we have to objects and other subjects, a *discrimination* asserted and performed in judgment. The objects and relations by way of which consciousness seeks itself are discrete and finite, and hence it must perpetually define itself as *something* in contrast to something else; a separate being encountering other separate beings. Only through separating and discerning the world, in the broadest sense thinkable, can we establish a place for ourselves in it. At the same time, we distinguish ourselves only in reference to an enigmatic unity that both transcends these separations and definitions, and allows them to have a meaning in the first place.

Of course, what we call identity can have various expressions. In the most ordinary sense of the word, identity can consist of the concrete preoccupation of a human being, of that which situates and defines it in the practical dimension of its world. But of interest here is identity in the more qualified and articulated respect, as the explicit search for a definition, orientation, mode or status that defines the own. As Hölderlin shows, identity in this respect reflects an urge to attain a mode where the difference between our anticipation of a unity in which the self is firmly immersed, our longing for this unity, and our being in the differentiated, objective world, is effaced. Or better: reconciled.

As will be shown below, it is not by accident that this Hölderlinian fragment explicates the collapse of identity in Hegel's logic. While unity tries to establish itself from two directions at once, that is, from the perspective of essential being and from the perspective of consciousness, it is inevitably shattered into identity and difference.

*WL* and *EW* thematize the internal structure of being as a structure of thought from the perspective of this essential negativity. As it becomes accessible to thought, being instantly negates itself. The immediacy of its fullness cannot maintain itself, cannot remain a wholeness other than as an abstraction. As a demonstration of this, *WL* begins with a direct reference to

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<sup>115</sup> *Ibid.*

being in the Hölderlinian sense. With “Being, pure being” *WL* commences.<sup>116</sup> In order to convey being in the primordial way intended, the first sentence of the work is not even a judgment. In the following, the originality of pure being fails to uphold itself, as being must reflect itself in thought or judgment. In other words, being must include subjectivity and consciousness. Therefore, with the concept of being, Hegel states, we immediately slip into its negation: the *Nothing*. Descending into consciousness, being posits its own void; out of its own internal logic, it manifests itself through a negativity within its wholeness. Without the Nothing, being would be a state of stasis, immovable and unknown in the respect that there would be no consciousness of it. As Kojève writes, “the existence of Negativity is, precisely, specifically human existence”.<sup>117</sup> And if being is that which can bend itself to an awareness of itself through the Nothing, then “becoming” is according to Hegel the logical third here. It is becoming that prepares the way for the full appearance of thought.

Hence, judgment would also for Hegel be “the *originative division* (or *Teilung*, in German) of an originative unity; the German word for judgment, *Urteil* (or ‘primordial division’), thus refers to what judgment is in and for itself”.<sup>118</sup>

Nevertheless, the idea of the *Logic* is to demonstrate that this descent also is the presupposition for being’s *ascension* into full awareness and presence of itself. Being can unfold itself into fullness if it has first negated itself. Therefore, identity and difference are for Hegel categories through which unified being can be recovered as a possibility at all.

How, then, could this possibility become actual, a living fullness, its indispensable negativity given? How are we to understand and enact this peculiar turn from negation to unification? If the human is the being that sustains this negation, manifesting it in and through its very cognitive and existential activity, could this negativity be overcome or sublated through an act of its mind? The question would finally be to what extent it is possible for self-consciousness to establish a relation to being, as it were, beyond itself, beyond its fundamental diremption of subjectivity and objectivity.

Hegel’s response to these questions should be unfolded against the background of the broader post-Kantian philosophical discourse within which Hölderlin’s fragment was composed. The fragment was written as a critical remark on Fichte’s position within German idealism, the latter as a whole defined by the pursuit of an encompassing absolute, where subjec-

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<sup>116</sup> “Sein, reines Sein”, *WL I*, p. 82. [*SL*, p. 59].

<sup>117</sup> Kojève (1980), p. 221.

<sup>118</sup> “die ursprüngliche *Teilung* des ursprünglich Einen; das Wort *Urteil* bezieht sich hiermit auf das, was es an und für sich ist”, *WL II*, p. 304. [*SL*, p. 552]. The addition in the English translation is di Giovanni’s.

tivity and objectivity per se could be brought together in unity. According to the Kantian turn of philosophy, the identity of the sensible, objective world was secured by the transcendental subject, or the transcendental, synthetic unity of apperception. On the basis of its original self-reflexivity, the apperception brought all sense impressions together in identity. This integration could only occur in one consciousness, a consciousness identical with itself. To consciousness itself, this was perceivable as an “I think” that accompanied all its representations.<sup>119</sup>

The Kantian self had an empirical dimension as well, aware of the concrete world and its impressions, as well as of the modes and sensations within itself. Because of this, the self, as both transcendental and empirical, was inwardly separated. These two different kinds of apprehensions in the subject mirrored the split in the object itself: the subject perceived the objectivity of objects, but not the objects in themselves.

What then, was the bridge between these dimensions? How could the human being be individual, empirical and finite, and at the same time manifest a universal, unifying and infinite dimension of subjectivity? How could it perceive itself in both dimensions, especially if lacking an access to the things in themselves? According to Fichte, Schelling, Hegel and Jacobi, this was the problem that Kant left unsolved.

For Fichte, the self was part of an absolute unity in the sense that it itself was the act of unification of subject and object by virtue of its self-consciousness. It was the medium for its own identity, as well as the identity of everything in being. In other words, the identity of the ego obtained its consistency through the unifying reflection of the extrinsic world. The proposition  $I=I$ , as the formula of self-reflection, expressed the positing of the unity of the world through the unified self.<sup>120</sup> This proposition brought self-consciousness together with the objects of consciousness: with the world itself in which it existed, but from which it also differed.

It is relevant to comprehend this as an act, as it is in the enactment of stating identity that self-consciousness could confirm it as a philosophical truth. Kantian accordingly argues that this act for Fichte not only was ontologically, but also epistemologically primordial. In this activity of intellectual intuition, there was no difference between that which the I perceived, and what it *was*. In both respects, the separation between subject and object was erased. Ac-

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<sup>119</sup> Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (2003), ¶ 16, pp. 178-181.

<sup>120</sup> Johann Gottlieb Fichte, *Grundlage der gesamten Wissenschaftslehre* (1995), p. 16.

complished was the unification of the divine and empirical aspect of the self.<sup>121</sup> Through existing in this respect, self-consciousness was conditioned by something which was not a part of the self, something obstructing it, but simultaneously enabling it to be a distinct being, separated from and yet *confirmed* by other beings – the non-I.

How, then, could the I posit something which in fact constitutes it? How could it abolish or incorporate it into itself? According to Hölderlin, Fichte never solved this contradiction. Absolute being could not be accomplished by self-consciousness, since the latter can never suspend its dependency on externality. Pinkard thus holds that: “if 'realists' make the mistake of thinking that the 'world' bestows determinateness on thought, 'subjective idealists' such as Fichte make the mistake of thinking that thought imposes all the determinateness on the world”.<sup>122</sup>

In *The Difference between Fichte's and Schelling's System of Philosophy*, Hegel appropriated and expanded this critique of Fichte. The positing of absolute being, he stated in this early work, involves a contradiction (*Widerspruch*), as the absolute on the one hand is dependent on the reflexive act of self-consciousness, and on the other hand immediately ceases to be absolute because of the reflection dividing it. The identity of the absolute is in other words broken by the power that posits it.<sup>123</sup> The highest law of reflection must therefore be its own *self-destruction*.<sup>124</sup> The fact that Fichte did not consider this condition for reflexivity and reason profoundly enough, was made clear to Hegel in Fichte's claims of the I=I-proposition: like the law of “objective” identity, A=A, the law of I=I remained an abstraction. For Hegel as well as for Hölderlin, the proposition did not regard the ontological effort of the transition from subject to object, as this cannot be enacted as a mere postulate. Therefore, Hegel indicated, the *essence* of the I was left out in this proposition: “The essence of the I and its positing do not overlap: *The I does not become objective.*”<sup>125</sup> As Hegel later wrote in *PhG*, what remained of Fichte's account was another pre-critical philosophy of substantiality, which could not account for the possibility of its own articulation.<sup>126</sup>

The question of whether and in what respect being according to Hegel can be reconciled with its inner negativity, is equal to the question of whether and how the strive for identity on

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<sup>121</sup> Kanterian (2012).

<sup>122</sup> Pinkard (2000), p. 135.

<sup>123</sup> Hegel, *Differenz des Fichteschen und Schellingschen Systems, Jenaer Schriften 1801-1807, Werke 2*, p. 25.

<sup>124</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>125</sup> “Das Wesen des Ich und sein Setzen fallen nicht zusammen: *Ich wird sich nicht objektiv*”, *Ibid.*, p. 56.

<sup>126</sup> *PhG*, pp. 22-23. I will follow A. V. Miller's 1977 translation of *PhG*, hereinafter referred to as *PS*. For the sake of clarity, all references to *PhG* will henceforth include the corresponding paragraph numbers of this translation, as this division is not used in the German edition. Here, ¶ 17.

the part of the human being can sublimate the same negativity. While the negativity was something that must be confronted, the reconciliation would according to Hegel not only be a possibility, but an internal *necessity* within being. This is a standpoint that must be explained in the light of Hegel's philosophical departure from the Hölderlinian conclusion, as a different way to understand the subject or the self.

Obviously, Hegel is acknowledged as a philosopher, Hölderlin as a poet. These different courses also convey their divergence in this matter. According to Hölderlin, being suggests a unification that is completely inaccessible to judgment. The concept of "intellectual intuition" is according to Henrich a "border concept of knowledge", separated from the form of knowledge of which self-consciousness is capable. It is an original intuition no longer involving what we call the ego.<sup>127</sup> In other words, consciousness is a faculty that can never *know* itself conceptually, nor know being. The younger Hegel indeed agreed that the unity of being was accessible only in an inarticulate feeling or intellectual intuition that was closed off to reflective knowledge. Arguing in line with Cirulli, the further development of Hegel's position in this question is distinguishable through his critique and appropriation of Jacobi.<sup>128</sup> Paragraphs 61-78 of *EW*, entitled "Third position of thought towards objectivity" ("Dritte Stellung des Gedankens zur Objektivität: Das unmittelbare Wissen") contain Hegel's most extensive critique of Jacobi after the 1802 work *Faith and Knowledge (Glauben und Wissen)*. Jacobi had argued that knowledge of the absolute, which was the same as knowledge of God, was impossible as conceptual knowledge. A comprehension of this kind was instead to be viewed in terms of the immediacy of faith. To understand an object categorically, was to understand its position within a causal chain, and thus the unconditioned would be reduced to something conditioned. Only faith could be knowledge in the sense of a direct *Anschauung* of the divine, of the noumenal sphere.

This understanding of the immediate presence of the divine made a decisive impression on Hegel, convincing him that "What this immediate knowing knows is that the infinite, the eternal, the God in our *representation* also *is* – that immediately and inseparably bound up with this *representation* in consciousness is the certainty of its *being*."<sup>129</sup> The idea of the eternal, of the infinite and of God are not representations generated by the self, but the outcome of a per-

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<sup>127</sup> "Grenzbegriff der Erkenntnis", Henrich (1991), p. 57.

<sup>128</sup> Cirulli (2006), pp. 12-15.

<sup>129</sup> "Das, was dieses unmittelbare Wissen weiß, ist, daß das Unendliche, Ewige, Gott, das in unserer *Vorstellung* ist, auch *ist*, – daß im Bewußtsein mit dieser *Vorstellung* unmittelbar und unzertrennlich die Gewißheit ihres *Seins* verbunden ist.", *EW*, ¶ 64, p. 153. [*EL*, p. 113].

ception of their *being*. Thought does not engender itself, but must be provoked by being in order to be what it is. As Cirulli argues,

it is this observation that beckons to Hegel's need for a reunification of the oppositions of ordinary life: Jacobi's point that absolute unity does not need to be pursued through infinite, consecutive syntheses (an impossible task anyway), since it is always already present in the finite. There is more than a Jacobian overtone in the Hegelian suggestion that our attempt to employ discursive Reflection as a snare to capture absolute unity implicitly takes its bearings from a unity already manifesting itself in the diremptions of our finitude (*"für sich schon bei uns"*).<sup>130</sup>

The paragraph from *PhG* cited here contains Hegel's comments on the view on knowledge as an instrumental, external medium or tool, through which we perceive the absolute, and which could be removed from the outcome. According to Hegel, the known cannot be separated from the position of the knower.<sup>131</sup> It is only for the knowing mind, and so, he ends the paragraph, "For it is not the refraction of the ray, but the ray itself whereby truth reaches us, that is cognition; and if this were removed, all that would be indicated would be a pure direction or a blank space."<sup>132</sup> In other words, true knowledge is inseparable from the perception of truth. It is both a receptivity to light, and the conscious activity responding to it.

Nevertheless, Kenneth Westphal argues, the whole of Hegel's philosophy can be viewed as an argument against Jacobi's claim that this immediacy is beyond conceptual thinking.<sup>133</sup> The following section in *EW* captures the essence of Hegel's main objection to the philosophy of this thinker:

The claim made from this standpoint [Jacobi's] is that neither the *idea* as a merely *subjective* thought nor a being solely for itself is what is true. The being that is solely for itself, a being that is not that of the idea, is the sensory, finite being of the world. In this way, then, it is immediately claimed that only the idea *mediated* by being, and conversely, only the being *mediated* by the idea *is the true* [*das Wahre*]. The proposition of immediate knowing rightly seeks not the indeterminate, empty immediacy, the abstract being or pure unity for itself, but instead the unity of *the idea* with being. But it is thoughtless not to see that the unity of *distinct* determinations is not just a purely immediate, i.e. completely indeterminate and empty unity, but instead that precisely in that unity it is posited that one determination possesses truth only by

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<sup>130</sup> Cirulli (2006), p. 13.

<sup>131</sup> *PhG*, pp. 68-69. [*PS*, ¶ 73].

<sup>132</sup> "nicht das Brechen des Strahls, sondern der Strahl selbst, wodurch die Wahrheit uns berührt, ist das Erkennen, und dieses abgezogen, wäre uns nur die reine Richtung oder der leere Ort bezeichnet worden", *Ibid.*, p. 69. [¶ 73, p. 47].

<sup>133</sup> Kenneth Westphal, "Hegel's Attitude Toward Jacobi in the 'Third Attitude of Thought Toward Objectivity' ", *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* (1989), Vol. 27 (1), p. 139.

virtue of being mediated by the other or, if you like, that each is mediated with the truth only through the other.<sup>134</sup> (2nd bracket in original.)

According to Westphal, this objection can be interpreted in several ways. If knowledge unites object and subjective representation, then this relation cannot be immediate. As has been demonstrated through Hölderlin's writing, the relation exposes a fundamental negativity in being and the human existence, and therefore the need for mediation. Furthermore, there is no way to determine the absolute presence as "God" *in contrast* to another object without the use of conceptual categories.<sup>135</sup> Another aspect of this, Westphal points out, is that there remains a difference between "knowledge of an object *x*" and "knowledge that the object is an *x*". That the object is knowable *as* an object, *as* this object, demands a reflection and a categorial framework. The fact that all knowledge has a cultural aspect to it, is also decisive as an argument against its immediacy.<sup>136</sup> This latter remark can be expanded as a reflection on the historical dimension of conceptual knowledge that Hegel explores in *PhG*.

Summarizing this clarification of Hegel's stance, Hegel's argument was that the unity of being could be apprehended merely by means of the activity of the human mind – not as an external object chased by the "instrument" of thinking, but as that which structures and moves the mind in the first place. Therefore, conscious thought *per se* was not the obstacle for Hegel, but only rational thinking in the Kantian respect: a thinking understanding itself as detached from the absolute.

But a consciousness thinking in accord with absolute being is a consciousness that could, as it were, perform the seemingly incredible task of abiding in the very non-place between subjectivity and objectivity, in the impossibility of their final unification. From this view, consciousness would be able to perceive itself and other beings from the perspective of being, rather than the perspective of diremption. For consciousness, however, this implies an experience of great ontological pain, as it is a question of a negation, of a *sundering* of the very disruptive structure constituting its natural self. In *this* negation, it first experiences the pain of

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<sup>134</sup> "Die Behauptung dieses Standpunkts is nämlich, daß weder die *Idee* als ein bloß *subjektiver* Gedanke, noch bloß ein Sein für sich das Wahre ist; – das Sein nur für sich, ein Sein nicht der Idee, ist das sinnliche, endliche Sein der Welt. Damit wird also unmittelbar behauptet, daß die Idee nur *vermittels* des Seins und umgekehrt das Sein nur *vermittels* der Idee *das Wahre* ist. Der Satz des unmittelbaren Wissens will mit Recht nicht die unbestimmte, leere Unmittelbarkeit, das abstrakte Sein oder reine Einheit für sich, sondern die Einheit *der Idee* mit dem Sein. Es ist aber Gedankenlosigkeit, nicht zu sehen, daß die Einheit *unterschiedener* Bestimmungen nicht bloß rein unmittelbare, d. i. ganz unbestimmte und leere Einheit, sondern daß eben darin gesetzt ist, daß die eine der Bestimmungen nur durch die andere vermittelt Wahrheit hat – oder, wenn man will, jede nur durch die andere mit der Wahrheit vermittelt ist.", *EW*, ¶ 70, pp. 159-160. [*EL*, pp. 118-119].

<sup>135</sup> Westphal (1989), p. 143.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 144-145.

distortion that was with it all along. The task of consciousness is to assume this painfulness, to let itself, as a diremption, to be sundered by the absolute, and then restore itself again from out of its unity. Henrich accordingly writes that for Hegel, ultimately, unity in terms of being or intellectual intuition does not precede this task or movement, but “is only the developed concept of this relation.”<sup>137</sup>

Consciousness' work to give up itself in order to be reestablished as something that knows itself through the fullness of the absolute, is therefore no theoretical matter for Hegel. Far more, it is the belief in self-sufficient, self-generated knowledge as such that is destroyed. As will be shown in the reading of *PhG*, the labor is that of an intensified existential immersion in the ontological negativity of judgment, bringing about a self-knowledge from out of the final destruction of the same judgment.

In this context, something should also be said about the distinction that Hegel makes between judgment and proposition as logical categories. This distinction will clarify the regard in which judgment for Hegel is a decisive function in the constitution of an identity within a shared world.

Hegel distinguishes between the grammatical judgment, and the logical one. Only the latter one is counted as a judgment in the proper sense, whereas the former, viewed logically, is a proposition. In *WL*, the logical judgment is defined as a statement that brings out something new, hitherto invisible in the subject: its determination according to a concept. The predicate must relate itself to the subject as a “conceptual determination” to be a judgment.<sup>138</sup> A mere proposition does not reveal something new about a matter:

“For proposition and judgment differ mainly because in the former the *content* constitutes the connection itself of the terms, or is a *specific connection*. Judgment, on the contrary, converts the content into a predicate which is a universal determinateness by itself, distinct from its connection which is the simple *copula*.”<sup>139</sup>

A judgment is therefore a statement where the predicate has an existence on its own, apart from the subject, and yet is brought together with the latter. The predicate must exist as a universal determination, pertain to a wider range of things than this particular subject in question.

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<sup>137</sup> “nur der entwickelte Begriff der Relation selber ist“, Henrich (2010), p. 36.

<sup>138</sup> “Verhältnis von Begriffsbestimmungen”, *WL II*, p. 305. [*SL*, p. 553].

<sup>139</sup> “Denn der Satz unterscheidet sich vom Urteil vornehmlich dadurch, daß in jenem der *Inhalt die Beziehung* selbst ausmacht oder daß er eine *bestimmte Beziehung* ist. Das Urteil dagegen verlegt den Inhalt in das Prädikat als eine allgemeine Bestimmtheit, die für sich und von ihrer Beziehung, der einfachen *Kopula*, unterschieden ist.”, *Ibid.*, p. 37. [p. 355].

A mere proposition, on the other hand, would according to Hegel be a statement tantamount to “Aristotle died at the age of 73 in the fourth year of the 115th Olympiad.” This could only be a logical judgment if doubt surrounded the date of Aristotle's death.<sup>140</sup>

What I want to stress here, is Hegel's understanding of judgment as a statement of disclosure, as the opening of a view on a subject from out of the larger context, category or universal to or in which it belongs. But how is this claim to be combined with the understanding of judgment as the diremption of self-consciousness itself, meaning, as Robert Pippin holds, to “being aware of being determinately conscious at all”?<sup>141</sup> According to my interpretation, Hegel attempts to demonstrate that judgment as “originative division” is the essence of self-consciousness, and that the ability to make explicit judgments, qualified in the logical respect given in *WL* and *EW*, emerges from this essence.<sup>142</sup> To become self-conscious is also to become conscious of the world and its inherent relations, mediated through a structure of universality, particularity and individuality. The human belonging to universality is established as a belonging to universal categories, which in turn differentiate themselves and become particulars. It is by way of this that subjects can identify themselves, one another, as well as the things surrounding them as parts of a larger whole; it is through these categories or universals that the individual strives for self-definition, for a particular identity situated in the common world and history. How this constitutes a problem in the shared world will be explicated in the reading of Hegel's interpretation of *Antigone* in chapter 2.3.

Taking the fragment of Hölderlin into consideration, what must be emphasized in this well-recognized tripartite structure of Hegelian identity is the necessity of a recognition and appropriation of the problem of being's negation of itself in consciousness. Only through succumbing to its negativity, through giving up the attempt to master it, can the human mind become conscious of a unity or universality that can encompass the particular individual.

In *PhG*, Hegel writes explicitly about judgment only in “(AA) Reason. A. Observing Reason” and “(BB) Spirit. B. Self-alienated Spirit. Culture”. These are sections in which consciousness becomes aware of itself as a consciousness. While the self is essentially judgment, the movement of *PhG* is also the gradual realization of this fact, as the transition from consciousness to self-consciousness. In this transition, judgment can discover itself and its inherent negation in an explicit manner. The purpose of the work is then to lead self-consciousness

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<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 305. [p. 553].

<sup>141</sup> Robert Pippin, “On Hegel's Claim that Self-Consciousness is 'Desire Itself'”, B. Manning Delaney and S.-O. Wallenstein (eds.), *Translating Hegel* (2012), p. 36.

<sup>142</sup> *WL II*, p. 304. [*SL*, p. 552].

to the critical point where it can *negate* this negation, thus reversing, negating, its own constitution. The question would be what kind of self-consciousness that is born anew from the ashes of this destruction.

## Chapter Two. Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* and the identity of subject and object

### 1. A mediated return to being

The understanding of the problem of identity and difference in *WL* is presented from the standpoint of conscious *spirit* in *PhG*, summarized in the following formulation:

Further, the living Substance is being which is in truth *Subject*, or, what is the same, is in truth actual only in so far as it is the movement of positing itself, or is the mediation of its self-othering with itself. This Substance is, as Subject, pure, *simple negativity*, and is for this very reason the bifurcation of the simple; it is the doubling which sets up opposition, and then again the negation of this indifferent diversity and of its antithesis [the immediate simplicity]. Only this *self-restoring* sameness, or this reflection in otherness within itself – not an *original* or *immediate* unity as such is the True. It is the process of its own becoming, the circle that presupposes its end as its goal, having its end also as its beginning; and only by being worked out to its end, is it actual.<sup>143</sup> (Brackets in original.)

Consciousness is here brought out as subject, and being as substance, that is, as the foundation and content of the world which this subject inhabits. Consciousness' path to self-realization through a reversed negation is the route to the recognition of itself as the actualizing medium of being. In this transformation, being and consciousness collide as conscious spirit. Henrich writes:

In this sense, a life that is not individual and yet has the constitution of subject is rightly to be called "spirit", as it leans only on itself, and on the basis of itself produces knowledge of itself. And so "spirit" is the word with which Hegel replaced Hölderlin's "Beyng".<sup>144</sup>

The aim of Hegel's philosophy is to show that being strives towards its own revelation. But as it is revealed for a consciousness, it has consummated itself as *spirit*, and is thus no longer

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<sup>143</sup> "Die lebendige Substanz ist ferner das Sein, welches in Wahrheit *Subjekt* oder, was dasselbe heißt, welches in Wahrheit wirklich ist, nur insofern sie die Bewegung des Sichselbstsetzens oder die Vermittlung des Sichanderswerdens mit sich selbst ist. Sie ist als Subjekt die reine *einfache Negativität*, eben dadurch die Entzweiung des Einfachen; oder die entgegengesetzte Verdopplung, welche wieder die Negation dieser gleichgültigen Verschiedenheit und ihres Gegensatzes ist: nur diese sich *wiederherstellende* Gleichheit oder die Reflexion im Anderssein in sich selbst – nicht eine *ursprüngliche* Einheit als solche oder *unmittelbare* als solche – ist das Wahre. Es ist das Werden seiner selbst, der Kreis, der sein Ende als seinen Zweck voraussetzt und zum Anfange hat und nur durch die Ausführung und sein Ende wirklich ist.", *PhG*, p. 23. [*PS*, ¶ 18, p. 10].

<sup>144</sup> "In diesem Sinne ist ein Leben, das nicht individuell ist und doch die Verfassung des Subjektes hat, rechtens 'Geist' zu nennen, da es nur auf sich selber ruht, und durch sich Wissen von sich hervorbringt. Und so ist 'Geist' das Wort, mit dem Hegel Hölderlins 'Seyn' ersetzte.", Henrich (2010), p. 38.

pure being. As soon as it is articulated as thought, perceived by a mind and bespoken, being is torn apart, turned into a restlessness – yet at the same time, it is immediately underway to *recover* its unity for this mind.

This “becoming”, the quotation from *PhG* continues, is not a mere addition of something new to being, but far more a return to its inner end, to that which grounds the becoming in question. On the part of consciousness, this forms the insight that it never had an identity on its “own”; that all self-positing and knowledge of self from the beginning related itself to being. The subject-ness of consciousness is confirmed when consciousness discovers itself as the foundation of this movement towards and back into spirit; it is in consciousness, in the human mind, and as we shall see, in its body, that this movement takes place.

In the immediacy of consciousness, being can only be perceived through the framework of a subject-object-relationship, where one aspect dominates over the other. But every form of certainty, Hegel claims, inadvertently discloses a horizon before and beyond this diremption. The different shapes of consciousness unfolded in *PhG* bring out the parallel strives of identity and differentiation in their structure, but also through proclaiming the one or the other aspect of this structure in their content, by claiming truth or unity from the perspective of universality *or* individuality, objectivity *or* subjectivity. The role of the work is to lead these various positions of knowledge beyond themselves, because the natural shortcoming of consciousness entails that it cannot do this on its own.<sup>145</sup> It can change within the limits of its own purview – for instance, in the case of sense-certainty, it can turn towards other sensuous objects – but it cannot go beyond its general object or framework of truth.

At the same time, it has been made clear that a dissection of the particular forms of knowledge cannot occur by way of an antithetical judgment imposed from outside. Rather, it must be shown to knowledge that its measure is limited. Knowledge must learn to hear its own claim, or rather, we must learn to hear its claim in its incompleteness. In engaging in this, the negativity of the position in question emerges for consciousness. Every form of knowledge based on a relation to an object – even if this object is the subject – entails a limitation, exposes a shadow. It is when consciousness dares to dwell in this shadow, that is, the reader of *PhG* addressed as the “we”, that it can surpass and transform the particular knowledge in question. This turning moment pertaining to the abidance in negativity, is what Hegel calls experience. In the introduction, the given definition of it is: “*Inasmuch as the new true object issues from it, this dialectical movement which consciousness exercises on itself*

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<sup>145</sup> *PhG*, pp. 79-80. [PS, ¶ 87].

and which affects both its knowledge and its object, is precisely what is called *experience* [*Erfahrung*].” (Brackets in original.)<sup>146</sup> Experience is the gradual grounding of epistemology in ontology; the grounding of judgment/consciousness in being. In the concluding chapter of the work, Hegel writes: “For this reason it must be said that nothing is known that is not in experience, or, as it is also expressed, that is not felt to be true, not given as an inwardly revealed eternal verity.”<sup>147</sup> Knowledge is nothing more than a production of theory and concepts if it lacks the intrinsic bond to ontology. In other words, it cannot claim to know without the impact of a facticity disclosing the weight of the things themselves, of their intractable being. Rather than project itself onto reality, the subject must open itself up to a resistance inherent in the world, to what is “real or actual, and in that sense other than thought”, as Martin de Nys writes.<sup>148</sup>

However, at this point an unclarity begins to disclose itself: is this resistance spoken of being’s opposition, or that of the objectivity of beings? Do these two ultimately coincide for Hegel, or do they differ? If we follow Heidegger’s argument, a clear answer to this question cannot be given from within the Hegelian framework, as this ambiguity in fact defines metaphysics. The problem will be further explored in chapter six of the present work.

While Hegel examines the epistemological and thing-oriented consciousness in chapter A, “Consciousness” (“Bewusstsein”), the following chapter, B. “Self-consciousness” (“Selbstbewusstsein”) deals with consciousness’ understanding of *itself* as a concrete location in an objective and intersubjective world. In the transition to this chapter, the following statement serves as a new orientation for this consciousness:

It is manifest that behind the so-called curtain which is supposed to conceal the inner world, there is nothing to be seen unless *we* go behind it ourselves, as much in order that we may see, as that there may be something behind there which can be seen.<sup>149</sup>

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<sup>146</sup> “Diese *dialektische* Bewegung, welche das Bewußtsein an ihm selbst, sowohl an seinem Wissen als an seinem Gegenstande ausübt, *insofern ihm der neue wahre Gegenstand* daraus *entspringt*, is eigentlich dasjenige, was *Erfahrung* genannt wird.”, *Ibid.*, p. 78. [¶ 86, p. 55].

<sup>147</sup> “Es muß aus diesem Grunde gesagt werden, daß nichts *gewußt* wird, was nicht in der *Erfahrung* ist oder, wie dasselbe auch ausgedrückt wird, was nicht als *gefühlte Wahrheit, als innerlich geoffenbartes* Ewiges, als *geglaubtes* Heiliges, oder welche Ausdrücke sonst gebraucht werden, vorhanden ist.”, *Ibid.*, p. 585. [¶ 802, p. 487].

<sup>148</sup> Martin de Nys, “Identity and Difference, Thought and Being”, *Identity and Difference* (2007), p. 93.

<sup>149</sup> “Es zeigt sich, daß hinter dem sogenannten Vorhange, welcher das Innere verdecken soll, nichts zu sehen ist, wenn *wir* nicht selbst dahintergehen, ebensosehr damit gesehen werde, als daß etwas dahinter sein, das gesehen werden kann.”, *PhG*, pp. 135-136. [*PS*, ¶ 165, p. 103].

But what this self-consciousness is now about to discover, is that it can only attain itself insofar as it loses its primary, immediate reference to its self.

## 2. Recognizing the other: the intersubjective structure of recognition

As “*Self-consciousness achieves its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness*”, the account of identity and self-consciousness in Hegel cannot avoid the question of recognition and intersubjectivity.<sup>150</sup> A significant part of the chapter on self-consciousness is dedicated to the awareness of otherness as another consciousness. How is reconciled identity, if we use this expression to denote an identity that can recover the unity of being, possible in an intersubjectively shaped, not to say determined, world? For Butler, this turns out to be the center of the difficulty of identity, the reason for the fact that the speculative copula becomes an aporia when it is thought as an expression of the identity of the subject with its world. According to my argument, however, this difficulty arises partly *because* this section is read as a primary genesis of the problem of identity. The focus on the question of recognition mainly begins with Kojève, and often leaves out other important aspects of identity and subjectivity, thus failing to contextualize the chapter with regard to the overall aim of the work. At the same time, the aim of this study is to understand the hermeneutics of this situation, that is, why and how this reading ultimately is provoked by Hegel himself.

The chapter on self-consciousness describes how consciousness can encounter other living beings of its kind, beings which sharing its mode of being. The difficulty of identity for Hegel includes the question of how to reconcile the dimension of universality with a self that is dispersed in an inherited world, giving it a permanent resistance not only by way of other objects, but other subjects as well. According to Hegel, therefore, a significant part of the ontological work of self-consciousness consists in the labor of mutual recognition.<sup>151</sup>

Yet in order to fully grasp the problem of recognition and intersubjectivity in Hegel, I will argue, we must not only recover the formal side of it that is presented in this section. It must equally be examined what it entails for consciousness to be doubled as a *determinate* voice in a concrete world. On my reading, the latter aspect is brought to light in Hegel's account of “the ethical world” and of Sophocle's *Antigone*.

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<sup>150</sup> *Das Selbstbewußtsein erreicht seine Befriedigung nur in einem anderen Selbstbewußtsein.*, *Ibid.*, p. 144. [¶ 175, p. 110].

<sup>151</sup> As Carl-Göran Heidegren notices, recognition is a constant topic in the work, and the word *Anerkennung* is mentioned mostly in chapter VI.C.c., the final section of BB, “Spirit” (“Der Geist”). Carl-Göran Heidegren, “Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*”, *Translating Hegel* (2012), p. 116. See *PhG*, pp. 492-493. [*PS*, ¶ 670]. Recognition in this respect is initially actualized in the religious community, but most fully in the philosophical. Heidegren (2012), p. 117.

At the beginning of chapter B.A, consciousness for the first time discovers a living opposition to immediate identity, namely other breathing beings. According to Hegel, the first basic impulse of consciousness is to covet these, as something to devour in desire; as something to destroy, in order to destroy otherness. But in discovering that the other being cannot be sublated in this way, that both the object and the desire repeat themselves, consciousness realizes the fruitlessness of plain destruction. It is in this situation that it discovers the independence of other consciousnesses, and the fact that it is only by way of a recognition of intersubjectivity that it can become a proper self – that its desire can be sublimated.<sup>152</sup>

This situation, however, also constitutes the emergence of true resistance, because consciousness has now doubled itself. It will find that its experience and judgment is countered by another's, that it does not embody the only perception of this world, but that others equally claim this form of presence. The next urge of consciousness is therefore to preserve itself and erase the other.

As this other is threatening consciousness' specific perspective of the world through its own, consciousness must fight with the other in a struggle of life and death.<sup>153</sup> With recognition as the object of desire here, however, the paradoxical condition of this struggle is that the other consciousness ultimately cannot be killed. Presence, and the truth of knowledge, can only be confirmed by way of another human being.<sup>154</sup> Accordingly, consciousness must recognize its dependency on the other. But before the moment when consciousness can articulate and incorporate this truth, the first consciousness enslaves the second and forces it to recognize him as the lord. Put differently, he forces him to share his knowledge or formation of the world. As a slave, the second consciousness works for the maintenance of the bodily existence of his master, unfettering the latter from his facticity through caring for his thinghood. In this process, the bondsman will become thinglike himself.<sup>155</sup>

In risking its life, the first consciousness shows that its judgment in fact aims at a universal truth transcending its particular existence, because it shows itself willing to sacrifice its individuality for it. The bondsman, on the other hand, values his individual life, because he recognizes the complementary condition for self-attainment: that it can never be achieved outside of life, as its premise also is a *corporeal* individuality. It is also the bondsman that eventually

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<sup>152</sup> *PhG*, pp. 143-144. [¶ 174-175].

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 148-149. [¶ 187].

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 149-150. [¶ 188].

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 150-151. [¶ 189-190].

realizes that the lord, when refusing to bear his own individuation, cannot sustain his identity. The slave discovers that his own labor eventually individuates him in such a way that he can now distinguish himself and his creative power in the object, mirror himself in his own work, and so retrieve a self-consciousness.<sup>156</sup> In other words, a judgment capable of recovering an authentic self-identity is only possible insofar as the bondsman gives itself over to “negativity *per se*”, a labor led by the facticity of constant fear, shaking him to the core. Fear of death allows labor to become a matter of pure negativity, and labor transforms this fear into a manifestation of essential self-expression. Presumably, Hegel has not the specific and limited negativity of ordinary hard labor in mind here, but rather an access to the ontological negativity of existence. In the discovery of the latter, the bondsman loses his own self-conception in an exhaustive manner; under the weight of full negativity, he must suffer self-distortion. Otherwise, Hegel argues, the tension of judgment will ensnare the slave as a “mind of one's own”, in the sense of “self-will” – the will to preserve one's immediate self.<sup>157</sup>

The liberation from enslavement in this section is thus not a question of a rediscovery of freedom or identity in any usual sense of the word, of a retrieval of the enclosed I-self. On the contrary, it is a matter of a destruction of this primary self-reference of the I. In this respect, the chapter articulately demonstrates the essence of Hegel's objection to Fichte; if identity is a knowledge and experience of the world as a unity that the I abides in, then the condition for this is the experience of the facticity of the same world, and the courage to appropriate this facticity as one's own. Hegel expresses it as a question of whether the creative work of the bondsman can “give it a consciousness of itself as essential being” or not.<sup>158</sup>

The struggle of life and death, as well as labor, expounds a vital element of thinghood and objective embodiment. Neither of the adversaries can achieve identity if they do not integrate the hidden forcefulness of reality. Nor can they recognize or be recognized beyond this condition. Either through risking the own life, or through labor, it is the full experience of the real that must be activated. The proximity to an experience of negativity as death and bodily annihilation announces that “spirit” for Hegel is not indifferent tranquility or disembodiment; rather, spirit is to *liberate* the own life from its ordinary mode of spiritual indifference, in which the body, the seat of one's finitude, is left numb. The individual must, as it were, assume its own corporeality, through exposing the body to an inherent, eruptive self-violence. According to my reading here, the struggle of life and death can thus on the one hand be understood as a

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<sup>156</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 150-154. [¶ 190-195].

<sup>157</sup> “Negativität *an sich*”; “Der eigene Sinn”; “*Eigensinn*”, *Ibid.*, pp. 154-155. [¶ 196].

<sup>158</sup> “ihm [...] das Bewußtsein seiner als des Wesens geben.”, *Ibid.*

literal struggle, of which there are many examples in history. The same pertains to labor. Read on an ontological level, however, they are not “violent” metaphors for a drastic change of thought or attitude in the subject, but depictions of an ontological, necessary self-violence that the living body is capable of on its own. It is the force of finitude itself, and therefore a violence intrinsic to the body – a vehemence aiming not at the destruction of life, but at the transformation of life into spirit. Consciousness cannot evade this violence if it is to pursue a unified self-consciousness, but must let its body become tangible and manifest in its exposure to death. How this experience manifests itself from the perspective of religion, in which, as will be shown, it is also consummated, will be further examined in chapter 2.4.

With the dialectic of lordship and bondage, Hegel portrays the two dimensions of self-identity that must be integrated if this identity is to be attained as a factual unity. According to my reading, identity in this respect should also be regarded as the *condition* for mutual recognition. The lord cannot be properly recognized if he himself does not maintain the truth of his judgment, or his self-consciousness, in his living individuality; if it can no longer be ontologically sustained. Conversely, the bondsman fails to be recognized if he does not recognize the power of his own judgment, the power of his own self-consciousness, of which he must take responsibility, but instead merely assumes the lord's. Both consciousnesses must encompass both moments of identity if recognition is to be possible. At the same time, this course includes a recognition of other, determinate human beings, as it is a recognition of what constitutes the human being as a universal. If this being is recognized as such, then all individual human beings must be subsumed under it, and therefore recognized in their individuality.

Hence, according to the chapter of self-consciousness interpreted here, the first problem of intersubjectivity is the recognition that other human beings are self-conscious as well. But how can recognition be concretely manifest, as something other than a formal, epistemological imperative? At the end of subchapter B.A. of *PhG* we are still left with the problem of the content and outcome of the struggle on a concrete intersubjective and historical level, as the question of the recognition and possible sublation of the substantial differences between subjects, together constituting a factual, historical world. In the following chapter, I will attempt to develop the argument that recognition, taken this determinate aspect into consideration, presupposes the experience of spirit. Recognition cannot be founded upon the subject's turn towards another subject, but only on their common belonging to the unity of spirit. This standpoint will be unfolded through an interpretation of section BB.A.a-b, on “The ethical

world” and “Ethical action” (“Die sittliche Welt”; “Die sittliche Handlung”), including Hegel’s interpretation of *Antigone*.

### 3. Recognizing spirit: Hegel’s reading of *Antigone*

Hegel’s interpretation of the ethical order of ancient Greece, through his adaption of *Antigone*, portrays the emergence of a rupture in a shared, ethical world, echoing the rupture in being explored in this study. This similarity is of course not coincidental, but intended as an account of how self-consciousness, also when claiming to take responsibility for unity, necessarily destroys it. Not only can it be interpreted as a portrayal of a specific historical-phenomenological situation, but also as a genealogical account of the problem of subjective, temporal and thus historical life as such, wherein the problem of recognition is embedded. The chapter prepares for the demonstration that reconciled identity entails a manner of abiding in history in which a specific gaze of wholeness is required, that Hegel claims to be completed in the absolute knowing that ends the work. This is a gaze that would allow consciousness to perform the remarkable task of recognizing the acts and duties of Creon and Antigone as equally valid and necessary.

Hegel’s definition of the world of ancient Greece as an “ethical world” suggests that the wills and senses of self of the individuals of this world would be equal to the general will, that is, to the shared practices, laws and duties constituting the whole. In other words, there is no difference prevailing between the ethical laws of the society, and the strivings of its citizens. Hegel describes a unity in which the difference between subjectivity and objectivity is not yet acted out. Nor is the difference between universality and individuality. What is thought, done and spoken is nothing but the substance of this world itself, understood as oneness.<sup>159</sup>

In this harmony, Hegel identifies two primary laws that structure the whole: the human and the divine law. While the first is the law that governs the state, the latter governs the family.<sup>160</sup> Both are aspects of one and the same ethical substance, as they both serve to sustain it.<sup>161</sup> The human breed cannot organize itself in communities if it does not at first hand care of the own kin, a form of care that is conditioned by a share of bloodline.<sup>162</sup> But the end of the human race is likewise to leave this immediate kinship and organize a community which surpasses

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<sup>159</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 329. [¶ 447].

<sup>160</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 329-330. [¶ 448-450].

<sup>161</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 328-329. [¶ 446].

<sup>162</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 330-334. [¶ 451-452].

the own genealogy.<sup>163</sup> The first law is thus the law of particularity: it cares for the individual insofar as this individual is never abstract, but always the concrete relative of someone; it guards over this individual as a member of a family where the pure, individual existence is valued as such. The other law protects the individual as a self-reflective guardian of the common good of the community. Already here it should be clear that the purpose of Hegel's interpretation is not to descry good and evil, but to show the tragic collision of two regulations.

According to Hegel's interpretation, these laws coexist harmoniously until the need for action appears:<sup>164</sup> the narrative of *Antigone* is activated. As the citizen Polynices has acted in treason, Creon claims the entitlements of the state to eject its enemies, through expelling his remains. However, Polynices is not merely a fiend of the universality of the state, but the relative, the brother of another citizen, namely Antigone. She, on her part, acts in defense of the sacred law of the blood through giving her brother a proper burial.<sup>165</sup> Antigone is punished and commits suicide, but so does the son and wife of Creon. The latter's remorse comes too late.

Following Hegel, the unity of this world collapses because the two dimensions of shared human life, particularity and universality, cannot coexist, as their laws cannot be maintained simultaneously. This, in turn, is connected to the fact that Antigone and Creon cannot reflect themselves as individuals outside of this order, as those entities through which the ethical order is maintained in the first place. They see themselves only as defenders of the universal whole, and have not yet realized that their deeds are outcomes of self-consciousness, of the reflection of the own I as a responsible individual within a universality. The moment of the discovery of this condition for ethical commonality is the moment of the rupture of the same wholeness. The tragedy occurs when the individual's belief to act in a confirmation of the whole, is disclosed as an individual, but ultimately obligatory, act of *destruction* of universality.

For Hegel, this is the phenomenological moment where the individual's alienation from unity is manifested historically and socially. According to Salvatore Russo, tragedy can be understood as "the penalty paid for individuality", paid precisely because of "the heroic negation of the universal".<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 334-335. [¶ 455].

<sup>164</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 342. [¶ 464].

<sup>165</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 343-344, 332-333. [¶ 452, 466].

<sup>166</sup> Salvatore Russo, "Hegel's Theory of Tragedy", *The Open Court* (1936), Vol. 1936 (3), p. 133.

Henceforth, the individual must agree to take on the ontological work of a reenactment of this unity, which was perhaps never possible in its pure form. In the chapter on religion, Hegel returns to the logic of tragedy in general, as well as its possible resolution, with the following words:

The action, in being carried out, demonstrates their unity in the natural downfall of both powers and both self-conscious characters. The reconciliation of the opposition with itself is the Lethe of the underworld in death; or the Lethe of the upper world as absolution, not from guilt (for consciousness cannot deny its guilt, because it committed the act), but from the crime; and also the peace of mind following atonement for the crime.<sup>167</sup>

Dennis Schmidt comments on this section as follows:

Whereas the avoidance of death is the turning point of the master-slave dialectic, the unavoidability of death (or an absolution that is so complete as to represent a dissolution and kind of death) is the truth of the dialectic of tragic conflict. Both death and absolution are presented as modes of forgetting because their results are a kind of dissolution and abolition of the fixity of opposition hardened into the tragic situation. [...] the inner tension of the tragic conflict cannot be surmounted or assimilated so long as the opponents of the conflict stubbornly hold on to the mutually incompatible claim to be the universal.<sup>168</sup>

My interpretation is that the tragedy can be sublated in a reconciliation insofar as consciousness can incorporate tragic death within its own *life*. The task could be described as the labor of an inner recognition, within the individual, of the coexistence of universality, particularity and individuality, whereupon the tragic collision between the three characteristics is transformed into the reconciliation of spirit. As will be further attested in chapter 2.4, this recognition is an explicit confrontation with, and return to, that which already constitutes self-consciousness. As Schmidt concludes,

The reconciliation of the tragic conflict thus requires a radicalization of the difference, or the struggle, which is the very source of tragedy. Following his analysis of *Antigone*, Hegel gives this higher identity of reconciliation a name: Spirit (cf. *PG*, 313), and it is in this notion of Spirit that Hegel claims to have

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<sup>167</sup> "Die Bewegung des Tuns erweist ihre Einheit in dem gegenseitigen Untergange beider Mächte und der selbstbewußten Charaktere. Die Versöhnung des Gegensatzes mit sich ist die *Lethe* der *Unterwelt* im Tode, – oder die *Lethe* der *Oberwelt*, als Freisprechung nicht von der Schuld, denn diese kann das Bewußtsein, weil es handelte, nicht verleugnen, sondern vom Verbrechen, und seine sühnende Beruhigung.", *PhG*, pp. 539-540. [¶ 740, p. 448].

<sup>168</sup> Schmidt (1988), p. 147.

demonstrated the path which overcomes the one-sided opposition which characterizes the narrow sense of subjectivity and representation.<sup>169</sup>

It is through spirit as a matter of an *inner* reconciliation, I argue, that reenacted unity can become a shared, historical matter, where the individual is re-integrated in a universality that includes particularity. As “What is lacking in the situation of the tragic collision is a consciousness of the whole”,<sup>170</sup> it is the judgment of wholeness that Antigone and Creon fail to accomplish: a judgment, a consciousness, that recognizes them *both* as necessary within the actual world and its history.

In this regard, identity for Hegel includes the attainment of a peculiar historical vision and location, characterized by a kind of receptivity unavailable to ordinary judgment. It is a vision and a location from which we can recognize every determinate, seemingly contingent, and sometimes ostensibly bad deed, action and identity occurring within the world and its history as an indispensable part of its wholeness. More about this location and its temporality will follow in section 5 of the present chapter.

With the appropriation of the tragedy of *Antigone*, Hegel adds an element to the question of recognition within identity that is not explicated in the chapter on the lord and bondsman. It shows that spirit in fact cannot be obtained through a recognition of the other subject, for such a recognition would be limited, and moves world history in the form of tragic strife, where those subjects that challenge the own judgment continuously must be defeated. Where one subject is recognized, another is necessarily rejected, especially in political contexts; a problem that Butler devoted a large part of her thinking to. It is, I would therefore claim, only the recognition of spirit that enables a vision that is capable of recognizing others without taking the own temporal and spatial situatedness – one’s limited subjectivity – as the point of departure of judgment. In the intimate integration of spirit, taking place as a struggle in the individual consciousness, the intersubjective history can according to Hegel move towards recognition. In completing the division within itself, in the dwelling in its own negativity, consciousness negates this negativity, and can thus establish a relation to the whole structure of being. Yet what does it mean to pursue this, more precisely?

Upon my reading, this endeavor is depicted most explicitly and articulately by Hegel in the figure of the “Unhappy Consciousness” (chapter B.B) and the analysis of the crucifixion and resurrection of Christ (chapter CC.C). In this, I adhere to Russo, who holds that the death of

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<sup>169</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 147-148.

<sup>170</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

Christ is Hegel's "most perfect example of tragedy outside of the drama".<sup>171</sup> On the basis of the mentioned sections, I will show how the incorporation of the tragic collision is represented in terms of the crucifixion, and corresponds to the sublation of the alienated consciousness characterizing modern history – a sublation that unfolds as a negation of the negation through which its unhappiness is maintained.

#### **4. Suspending judgment: the “Unhappy Consciousness” and the sundering of the self**

In the present chapter, I will argue that the transformation of self-consciousness into spirit, displayed by Hegel as a suffering of the inversion of its negativity, is concentrated in the portrayal of Christ's death and resurrection. I will begin with a reading of Hegel's figure of the “Unhappy Consciousness”, demonstrating how it captures the problem of individuality within unity. This will be followed by a reading of section 785 in the chapter on religion, where the analysis of Christ's demise is found.

Historically-phenomenologically, the Unhappy Consciousness corresponds to the birth of the religious consciousness as such, which for Hegel is equivalent to Christianity, or the transition from Judaism to Christianity. It is first presented in chapter B.B, and manifests a spiritual, cultural and existential problematic that according to Hegel will abide until the absolute knowing, or the culmination of history which *PhG* claims to anticipate. For this reason, it has also become an independent philosophical trope, denoting a recurring tenseness within culture and history. The Unhappy Consciousness is the most explicit historical and ontological experience of the remoteness of identity as reconciled unity.

How is this enacted in the Unhappy Consciousness? This cognitive state is thrown between the inarticulate insight that its individual, finite existence, embedded in a world of objects, is the medium for a possible recollection of absolute identity, and the articulated fear that the same existence is the hindrance. Like the section on the bondsman and its labor, corporeality is here the aspect of individuality that comes to the fore, as that which defines the border between consciousness and being. Here, the transcendental aspect of consciousness perceives itself from out of the belonging to an infinite, divine unity. Acknowledging the reason of the stoics, this consciousness maintains a relation to essential being, yet in the form of a monotheistic God. But as it has appropriated the doubt of the sceptics, it fails to unite this God with the presence of manifoldness and the finitude of the world, including its own.<sup>172</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> Russo (1936), p. 134.

<sup>172</sup> *PhG*, p. 163. [¶ 206].

Thus, the Unhappy Consciousness has faith in the essentiality and unity of being, while at the same time aware of the part that *it* has in it insofar as it is conscious of it. In devoting itself to the divine, thought is simultaneously drawn back to the own, finite existence, facing the question of its meaning and legitimacy. The internal division of consciousness is here played out as an opposition between God's presence or kingdom on the one hand, and the individual, earthly consciousness on the other.<sup>173</sup> In other words, the experience of the negativity in the structure of the self now becomes an urgent existential crisis that faces the question of condemnation and sin. And so Hegel writes:

This new form is, therefore, one which *knows* that it is the dual consciousness of itself, as self-liberating, unchangeable, and self-identical, and as self-bewildering and self-perverting, and it is the awareness of this self-contradictory nature of itself.<sup>174</sup>

At the outset, God is for consciousness something explicitly separated from it; a remote, unknown One which expels all particularity and individuality. For Hegel, this problem demonstrates the distinctive trait of religion generally, and the revealed religion of Christianity specifically. Religion projects the divine and universal aspect of being onto a transcendent and otherworldly region, separating it eternally from worldly and finite consciousness.<sup>175</sup> Religion is therefore both an expression of the necessary recognition of the fundamental, ontological negativity of the self, and its unwarranted consolidation. For this reason, Hegel holds that it is subordinate to absolute knowing, as it expresses something which cannot be exhausted in its religious depictions, a structure that widely surpasses its manifestation as religion. Nonetheless, religion, on Hegel's reading, is an essential, preparing experience of the absolute. The reason for this will become clear in what follows.

With the birth of Christ, through his manifested bodily existence, the divine reveals itself as partly human and earthly apparent. According to Hegel however, the message of this revelation cannot be that of an immediate reconciliation of consciousness and essential being. For Christ's individuality remains an *other* to this consciousness, insofar as it is *the body of another*. The celebration of the event of the revelation of Christ ends abruptly with the factual-

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<sup>173</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164. [¶ 208].

<sup>174</sup> "Diese neue Gestalt ist hierdurch ein solches, welches *für sich* das gedoppelte Bewußtsein seiner als des sich befreienden, unwandelbaren und sichselbstgleichen und seiner als des absolut sich verwirrenden und verkehrenden und das Bewußtsein dieses seines Widerspruches ist.", *Ibid.*, p. 163. [¶ 206, p. 126].

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 497-498. [¶ 678].

ness of his tomb, marking the finitude and limitedness of this individual as well, and thus instating the abysmal border between God and consciousness anew.<sup>176</sup>

That individuality here is experienced exactly as a problem of corporeality, is made most clear in paragraph 222. Through an initial asceticism in the form of bodily manoeuvres of prayer, work and penitence, consciousness attempts to reject and expel its own body<sup>177</sup> – yet with every one of these practices, the body announces and reinstates itself as the active tool for this performance.<sup>178</sup> In this way, corporeal individuality can never be sacrificed. Embodied presence constitutes an ambiguity that cannot be overcome by way of a usage of this presence.

That a spiritual reconciliation between God and consciousness for Hegel constitutes the end of the chapter as well as of the whole *Phenomenology* is a known fact. But the question is what the condition for this reconciliation would be? What would an affirmation of individual existence mean, that is able to sublimate the negativity without which consciousness cannot be? My argument is that while finite consciousness and its body according to Hegel ultimately must not be rejected as a "nothing", it can only be affirmed when it is acknowledged in its true ontological status, namely as a manifestation of being's negativity. This means that consciousness cannot retract its experience of the problematic weight of its corporeality as a delusion posited by its self-reflexivity; it cannot be inverted through the positing of another judgment, in this case a judgment on the positivity and necessity of the body. For the problem was never the falseness of a specific thought.

Instead, the attitude which maintains the ground split of self-consciousness, is the latter's belief in the possibility to reconcile with infinite being merely *by way of* its self-positing activity – its judgment. In this way, it merely rejects and ignores the diremption in question. For Hegel's argument is exactly that this negativity is not *created* by consciousness and its thought, but constitutes its way of *being*. Self-consciousness, in its very structure, is an arch-separation of being, including its own. The negativity of being itself is therefore the same negativity that the human experiences through the carrying of its individual, embodied existence, meaning that the latter also constitutes a very specific *closeness* to being.

Hence, the Unhappy Consciousness' suffering of its condition is as ontologically necessary as it is real, why an affirmation of corporeal existence accordingly begins with the recognition and suffering of negativity, as the only passage to the sphere where this division can be destroyed. In the preface of *PhG*, Hegel's words on spirit are the following:

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<sup>176</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 169-170. [¶ 217].

<sup>177</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 168-172. [¶ 217-221].

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 172-173. [¶ 222].

It is this power, not as something positive, which closes its eyes to the negative, as when we say of something that it is nothing or is false, and then, having done with it, turn away and pass on to something else; on the contrary, Spirit is this power only by looking the negative in the face, and tarrying with it. This tarrying with the negative is the magical power that converts it into being.<sup>179</sup>

Hence, self-consciousness' sublation of its unhappiness would demand the *suspension* of its own, natural attempts to unification; it is the radical renunciation of its strive for self-attainment.

The chapter on the Unhappy Consciousness ends with the introduction of a channel for this task, a medium often interpreted as a priest. Its significance seems to consist of a demonstration of the fact that the impulse to self-sacrifice does not stem from consciousness, and does not refer back to it, but has its source in the infinite being which for Hegel is God. However, at this point, this sacrifice is only *negative*, a loss of self that cannot reveal the positive meaning of individuality – or of its loss. But what would something like a positive loss of self be?

This question is partly answered already in the paragraph quoted above. Here, Hegel utters the famous words on what it would mean for consciousness to acknowledge the negativity that it already is: “But the life of Spirit is not the life that shrinks from death and keeps itself untouched by devastation, but rather the life that endures it and maintains itself in it. It wins its truth only when, in utter dismemberment, it finds itself.”<sup>180</sup> A positive loss of self is the gaining of spirit.

According to my argument, Hegel's most explicit depiction of this phenomenological death is found in the dialectical analysis of the crucifixion of Christ in paragraph 785. The section can therefore be read as an explication of the transfiguration that consciousness must undergo, a transformation allowing it to recognize its factual existence from out of a realm of divine wholeness.

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<sup>179</sup> ”Diese Macht ist er nicht als das Positive, welches von dem Negativen wegsieht, wie wenn wir von etwas sagen, dies ist nichts oder falsch, und nun, damit fertig, davon weg zu irgend etwas anderem übergehen; sondern er ist diese Macht nur, indem er dem Negativen ins Angesicht schaut, bei ihm verweilt. Dieses Verweilen ist die Zauberkraft, die es in das Sein umkehrt.”, *Ibid.*, p. 36. [¶ 32, p. 19].

<sup>180</sup> ”Aber nicht das Leben, das sich vor dem Tode scheut und von der Verwüstung rein bewahrt, sondern das ihn erträgt und in ihm sich erhält, ist das Leben des Geistes. Er gewinnt seine Wahrheit nur, indem er in der absoluten Zerrissenheit sich selbst findet.”, *Ibid.*

In his demise, Christ represents the end of the representation of the divine unity as the particular individuality of Jesus.<sup>181</sup> Again, Christ in the shape of a determinate and manifest human being will remain an unattainable other to consciousness.

What his death ultimately unveils, is that each individual already has, or is, the potential to the same transition as Christ. For the seat of his transformation is that feature that most evidently limits our presence in timespace, namely the individual body. It is in the body that the pain of finitude is anchored.

The broken identification with bodily individuality, with which human existence begins, must now be brought to a head. Consciousness must let the experience that corporeal existence is an obstacle to being to be intensified. Rather than an attempted escape from, it is thus a deepening of this experience that I only have myself through a factual, physical body, and that this obstructs full self-attainment and wholeness.

Following the logic of the cross in Hegel, it is through exposing the body to itself, to its own ontological heaviness and concretion, that consciousness can let it die away as a burdening facticity. The suffering of the self must in other words be assumed in such a respect and to such an extent that it is transformed into the greatest loss of self – to a death in life. The death of Christ, I argue, must become consciousness' own death, as the self-sacrifice arisen from the uttermost affirmation of what it means to be a corporeal self.

The moment in which the individual cannot uphold its own weight, the moment of its death in life, is according to Hegel also the hour in which God dies – for in this suffering, there is no longer space for the divine: being completely given over to itself, the body, seemingly, perceives only itself. This is an experience of complete despair and abandonment. Consciousness, when dying away, is withdrawn from every sense of unity and belonging. In this sense, the joint in the expression of self-identity recede. The mind loses its impulse to reach for self-confirmation.

The moment of reconciliation emerges when the death of God turns out to be the death merely of the *abstract* God, of the representation of him as a remote being. Expressed philosophically, it is the vanishing of the primordial unity as an unattainable beyond, which holds the finite and bodily consciousness as an other. Correspondingly, when individualization becomes a hardship that is impossible to bear, the subject recognizes that this individual body is the vessel of being, not of its individuality, and is hereby resurrected into a unity which is revealed as spirit. In Hegel's own words,

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<sup>181</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 570. [¶ 785].

The death of the Mediator is the death not only of his *natural* aspect or of his particular being-for-self, not only of the already dead husk stripped of its essential being, but also of the *abstraction* of the divine being. [...] The death of this picture- thought contains, therefore, at the same time the death of the *abstraction of the divine being* which is not posited as Self. That death is the painful feeling of the Unhappy Consciousness that *God Himself is dead*. This hard saying is the expression of innermost simple self-knowledge, the return of consciousness into the depths of the night in which 'I' =I', a night which no longer distinguishes or knows anything outside of it. This feeling is, in fact, the loss of substance and of its appearance over against consciousness; but it is at the same time the pure *subjectivity* of substance or the pure certainty of itself which it lacked when it was object, or the immediate, or pure essence. This Knowing is the inbreathing of the Spirit, whereby Substance becomes Subject, by which its abstraction and lifelessness have died, and Substance therefore has become *actual* and simple and universal Self-consciousness.<sup>182</sup>

How are we to understand this specific reference to the statement I=I? It is not plausible to assume that Hegel would use it entirely without a reference to Fichte, and yet, for Fichte this formula was the gesture of self-confirmation, of self-identity as an immediate matter. Hegel, on the contrary, here explores it as a dark night that is a “return” only as the mediated consummation of something. Thus, if it is an answer to Fichte, John Burbidge states, “it is used more ironically than directly”.<sup>183</sup> Even though ironical, I believe that a deeper reversal of Fichte is embedded here. What Hegel attempts to demonstrate, is that the phenomenon of self-identity must be understood on the basis of an inherent, ontological labor involving self-dispersion. The formula turns into a frightful and difficult enactment of self-confrontation, as the bare experience of what it means that I can only embody myself as a finite existence, while this existence does not belong to myself, but has its truth only in divine being. In accordance with this, an interpretation of this quoted passage about the death of God would be that individualization both is the necessary medium for true identity, and that the subjectively

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<sup>182</sup> ”Der Tod des Mittlers ist Tod nicht nur der *natürlichen Seite* desselben oder seines besonderen Fürsichseins; es stirbt nicht nur die vom Wesen abgezogene, schon tote Hülle, sondern auch die *Abstraktion* des göttlichen Wesens. [...] Der Tod dieser Vorstellung enthält also zugleich den Tod der *Abstraktion des göttlichen Wesens*, das nicht als Selbst gesetzt ist. Er ist das schmerzliche Gefühl des unglücklichen Bewußtseins, daß *Gott selbst gestorben* ist. Dieser harte Ausdruck ist der Ausdruck des innersten sich einfach Wissens, die Rückkehr des Bewußtseins in die Tiefe der Nacht des Ich = Ich, die nichts außer ihr mehr unterscheidet und weiß. Dies Gefühl ist also in der Tat der Verlust der *Substanz* und ihres Gegenübertretens gegen das Bewußtsein; aber zugleich ist es die reine *Subjektivität* der Substanz oder die reine Gewißheit seiner selbst, die ihr als dem Gegenstande oder dem Unmittelbaren oder dem reinen Wesen fehlte. Dies Wissen also ist die *Begeisterung*, wodurch die Substanz Subjekt, ihre Abstraktion und Leblosigkeit gestorben, sie also *wirklich* und einfaches und allgemeines Selbstbewußtsein geworden ist.”, *Ibid.*, pp. 571-572. [¶ 785, p. 476].

<sup>183</sup> John Burbidge, “Is Hegel a Christian?”, D. Kolb (ed.), *New Perspectives on Hegel's Philosophy of Religion* (1992), p. 106, n. 10.

enclosed individual finally is what must be destroyed for this identity to be established. This pain, as “the needle eye that we must pass through” is what can turn into an experience of speculative identity,<sup>184</sup> of the illumination of finitude as the site of the divine and absolute.

And so, when the negation of being is explicitly assumed by the individual subject, it inverts itself into a negation of this negation. As the body makes room for the whole force of its being, which in the beginning is experienced precisely as negativity, frightfulness and suffering, being assumes the finite body as its true medium. For Hegel, this means that being is disclosed as the living spirit of God – but God, in turn, as spirit.

It is hereby as spirit that the self can be mediated to itself in a fundamental sense. Spirit manifests itself as that which keeps the I together beyond the negation of its judgment, breaking through in the reflection of itself in the I. Accordingly, the I, on its part, no longer reflects *itself*, its ego, as its true self, but spirit: its natural self-reflexivity is shattered to the core. The individual, then, is consummated in the ontological and phenomenological determination that it had from its very beginning: to be the form for the most profound encounter with divine being.

As spirit, God is therefore equally transformed: he is no longer the abstract Christian God, but a divinity that cannot be represented beyond its substantiation in humanity, that in fact cannot be represented at all, but merely be present in an exposure to being. As dead in the abstract respect, he is sublated in absolute spirit, the absolute of which self-consciousness now is a true part.

Consciousness is for Hegel the subject of spirit in the sense that it is established as the lucid foundation of spiritual unity, harboring both this unity, and bodily individuality. In the following and last chapter of *PhG*, consciousness is accordingly confirmed as absolute knowledge, as it has recognized an essence that was with it all along.

## **5. Identity as a historical end**

The previous subchapter demonstrated how the mediated reconciliation of unity from the perspective of religion is carried out as an incorporation of the pain and resurrection of Christ by the Unhappy Consciousness. The moment when consciousness recognizes itself as a subject that is equally divine substance, is also the point where subjectivity and objectivity contract and the negativity dividing them is sublated.

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<sup>184</sup> “det nålsöga som måste passeras igenom”, Carl-Göran Heidegren, *Hegels Fenomenologi* (1995), p. 333.

Conceptually, for Hegel, this corresponds to the speculative sublation of universality in individuality, and individuality in universality. This can now occur in the world of the *particular* individual – in the determinate and situated life of the individuated human being.

With this account of reconciliation, we must return to the problem of intersubjectivity as a question of history and historicity. What constitutes unified identity is according to Hegel its power to encompass determinate individuals; it is thus a power which does not only hold the individual from within, but from without, as part of a historical world including a multiplicity of other individuals. The individuals are bound together in a universality through particulars of different kinds, be it institutions, roles or structures. These are world-historical mediums for a universality shared by the whole of humanity, mediums through which the individual obtains an existence of a determined kind, and yet in reference to universality. For Hegel, the crucial with this cohesive, tripartite structure is that while the individual subjects are a part of it, they have not created it in the first place; the particulars are not their “subjective” creations, nor something suppressing their subjectivity, but a middle between a divine universality without divisions, and the human apprehension of this universality, necessarily including concreteness. The authority sustaining this mediation is spirit. Hence, identity on an individual level, according to this account, becomes a question of living a life bound not by the own subjectivity, nor by objectivity, but by spirit. It is in the light of spirit, that others are parts of the own life and of a common world.

Against the background of this, we may now ask more specifically: what is consciousness’ relation to time and history as such, according to chapter D.D, “The absolute knowing” (“Das absolute Wissen”)?

In the chapter on absolute knowing, Hegel writes that the difference inherent in the I=I-principle is to be comprehended as *time*.<sup>185</sup> Time is the root of this difference. The time of *PhG* is accordingly the historical moment where a reconciliation with time itself is possible, if the latter is understood not as something empty, but as determinate: as historical time. In this regard, the reconciliation with time is a reconciliation with history, the essence of which is explicated more clearly in a passage such as the following: “The movement of carrying forward the form of its self-knowledge is the labour which it [spirit] accomplishes as actual History”<sup>186</sup> Spirit is history itself in its movement towards the point where it can grasp the logic of its own dynamics. More precisely, history is the facticity of spirit, its “labor”. Following

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<sup>185</sup> *PhG*, p. 587. [PS, ¶ 803].

<sup>186</sup> “Die Bewegung, die Form seines Wissens von sich hervorzutreiben, ist die Arbeit, die er als *wirkliche Geschichte* vollbringt.”, *Ibid.* [¶ 803, p. 488].

Hegel's account, spirit both seems to be the framework of history, and the unfolding of history itself, leading up to the moment where it can recollect itself. History is "Spirit emptied out into Time".<sup>187</sup>

But how, then, is spirit to be comprehended as a position where history is not only unfolded, but completed in the sense of *finished*? Hegel continues:

This Becoming presents a slow-moving succession of Spirits, a gallery of images, each of which, endowed with all the riches of Spirit, moves thus slowly just because the Self has to penetrate and digest this entire wealth of its substance. As its fulfilment consists in perfectly *knowing* what *it is*, in knowing its substance, this knowing is its *withdrawal into itself* in which it abandons its outer existence and gives its existential shape over to recollection.<sup>188</sup>

Thereafter, he holds that spirit nevertheless must repeat the whole movement unceasingly, as if its knowledge was lost. Recollection, however, has preserved the experience, and when commencing anew, spirit carries it with.<sup>189</sup>

The position of absolute spirit is hereby brought out as the spatiotemporal location of a consciousness that has sublated the different dimensions of the same spirit, experienced as sequential stages in consciousness' encounter with its inherent negativity. Spirit and its history recollect themselves through the self-negation of consciousness.

Spirit can therefore be understood as the site and temporality of a historical mindfulness which is able not just to *be* in history, but to appropriate its innermost logic in such a way that the human consciousness becomes the shelter of its innermost core. In other words, rather than being a point in contingent history, consciousness is now a mindfulness of its essence, a conduct that allows history's various spirits to confront one another, that sunders them, and brings them together anew. This point of recollection appears to have its own temporality, a temporality where time is suspended. In this regard, the essence of history is the stillness of eternity.<sup>190</sup>

In *WL*, reflection is explicitly viewed as recollection. According to Hegel, it is not merely a question of regarding things that are already in being; reflection performs the task of "reshap-

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<sup>187</sup> "der an die Zeit entäußerte Geist", *Ibid.*, p. 590. [¶ 808, p. 492].

<sup>188</sup> "Dies Werden stellt eine träge Bewegung und Aufeinanderfolge von Geistern dar, eine Galerie von Bildern, deren jedes, mit dem vollständigen Reichtume des Geistes ausgestattet, eben darum sich so träge bewegt, weil das Selbst diesen ganzen Reichtum seiner Substanz zu durchdringen und zu verdauen hat. Indem seine Vollendung darin besteht, das, was *er ist*, seine Substanz, vollkommen zu *wissen*, so ist dies Wissen sein *Insichgehen*, in welchen er sein Dasein verläßt und seine Gestalt der Erinnerung übergibt.", *Ibid.*

<sup>189</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 585. [¶ 802].

ing what is immediately on hand”.<sup>191</sup> This demands that we recall ourselves from immediate experience and thought, in order to return to the essence of being. It is a recall of something that in one respect belongs to a past, however not in a chronological, nor in a static respect, but as a potential the essence of which it is to await us, and which is recovered as something pre-given or eternal *in the recollection only* – “timelessly past” being.<sup>192</sup> In this context, Hegel also accentuates the German past participle of the word being (*Sein*), namely *gewesen*, thus alluding to the German word for essence (*Wesen*).<sup>193</sup> To recollect history would thus be to recollect its eternity, which is also its essence – to recollect the space in which everything temporal occurs, a realm that holds time itself.

The eternal encompasses the infinite as well. For Hegel, the negation of the negation of finitude, in this case finite consciousness, also implies the opening of the dimension in which beings are interconnected beyond their spatial or bodily limitedness – the dimension of the absolute as infinitude.<sup>194</sup>

As a being that unfolds spirit in its knowledge of it, consciousness is the subject of history. From another perspective however, consciousness is merely that entity *through* which history reveals itself as spirit. From the viewpoint of spirit, history itself provides the possibility of this supra-historical temporality, as its own completion or ending. History's culmination in absolute knowing is in this sense an effort on the part of spirit as history itself, not consciousness. As the becoming in question here is the *self*-becoming of substance or spirit, this leaves the prefix “self” in the word ambiguous. This ambiguity, it will be shown, partly motivates Heidegger's critique of Hegel's account of identity and difference. Spirit, which for Hegel in the end coincides with reconciled identity, is on the one hand something that must be actively achieved by consciousness, and pertains to a separate, finite mind. On the other hand, spirit is the subordination or absorption of the same consciousness into allness. In itself, this doubleness would not have to be an aporia. But the problem that both Heidegger and Butler would recognize in Hegel's thinking at this point, is how the question of fundamental negativity recedes in this account. Self-consciousness, Hegel had shown, cannot open up to being without the encounter with the negativity of its own structure as well as of being. Insofar as negativity has to do with self-consciousness' character of finitude however, this self-encounter is a task that somehow is essentially conditioned by the limitedness of the own existence. But the place

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<sup>191</sup>“das unmittelbar Vorhandene umgestaltet”, *EW*, ¶ 22, p. 79. [*EL*, p. 56].

<sup>192</sup> “zeitlos vergangene Sein”, *WL II*, p. 13. [*SL*, p. 337].

<sup>193</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>194</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 148-149; see also *PhG*, p. 591.

of finitude and negativity in Hegel's final account of identity appears to be absent: these limits of being cannot really be accounted for within the structure of the absolute knowing. It is against the background of this omission that Butler's and Hegel's critiques are comprehensible.

For Butler, together with many other critics, this idea of reconciliation was not convincing, but remained highly problematic. If history is collected in a dimension of eternity that encompasses intersubjectivity, as the collection of the temporality, spatiality and particularity of all subjects in *one* finite, particular individual, could then the prefix *inter-* of the word intersubjectivity be valid in terms of a *mutual* recognition? If spirit is rooted in the individual, corporeal and temporal subject, then what is the transition to the other subjects and their temporality and factualness? If the subject is the form through which spirit unfolds, how can this form be multiple? Translated into the theme of this dissertation, the decisive question would for Butler be what or who it is that holds and determines Hegelian identity. Spirit could no longer be considered as an independent authority. For her, this identity as openness towards the infinite must rather imply an openness to the opacity of the other subject: if each subject is a ground, a *ὑποκείμενον*, then the mutual recognition among subjects must be an acknowledgement of the fact that the own subject from the beginning is subjected to the other. In other words, the universals through which the subject grasps itself as a particular part of history, are constituted by the otherness of other subjects, and not spirit in the sense considered above. History is therefore what again makes identity insecure: as we are constituted by the temporalities of others, we can have no final access to our own.

For Heidegger, I will show, it is the ambiguity of the subject and its status that will submit Hegel to his critical reading. On the one hand, being is that which keeps subjectivity and objectivity apart, as well as that which unifies them, without being a subject or an object itself – yet on the other hand, it comes to represent the unified sum of subjects and objects. As I will show, it is identity understood as this conforming sum that is the object of Butler's critical reading, without being considered in relation to being as something qualitatively other than this sum.

With this problem as point of departure, I will continue with chapter three, which commences with Kojève's reading of section B.A in Hegel's chapter on self-consciousness. The crucial with Kojève's concentration on this part of the chapter and work only, is that the important connection between spirit and recognition disappears, whereupon recognition becomes the sole matter of recognizing the other as a "subject of desire", as captured in the title

of Butler's work. On the basis of this reading, identity ceases to be a matter of ending the subject under the sway of absolute spirit, and instead becomes the attempt to stake out its borders in a whole new respect.

## Chapter Three. Butler and the inversion of Hegelian identity

### 1. Background: Kojève reading Hegel's *Phenomenology*

For Hegel, spirit's return to itself, its becoming a "unity of identity and difference",<sup>195</sup> is also its route to itself as human subjectivity. Correspondingly, the subject comes to be itself as spirit by way of the appropriation of its substance, which is "timelessly past" being, unfolded as history.

With Kojève, this self-arrival of the subject would be interpreted along another line. For him, the ending and *telos* of *PhG* intended man's institution of himself as the center of history, the work as a whole disclosing his transformation into this midpoint. From this perspective, human identity was determined as the self-unfolding consummation of consciousness and its inner capacity. Identity was found and created in man's self-reflexivity, in the subject's turn towards itself. Butler writes:

For Kojève, Hegel's metaphysical categories find their consummate expression in human ontology; the categories of being, Becoming and Negation are synthesized in human action. Action that is truly human transforms (negates) that which is brutally given (being) into a reflection and extenuation of the human agent (Becoming).<sup>196</sup>

This argument entails a profound re-reading of the Hegel of the previous chapters. For Kojève, the route of the *Phenomenology* was not that of a negation of the negating structure of human consciousness or judgment, but of its gradual self-confirmation.

Kojève's point of departure is Hegel's critique of Fichte, taken as the standpoint that neither the subject, nor the object in itself could be primary, as spirit divides itself into the sphere of subjectivity, as well as that of objectivity. But according to Kojève, being in Hegel is equal to objectivity in the sense of space, thingness, or nature. The ambiguity of Hegel's employment of being was thereby settled, forgotten as an ambiguity. Subjectivity on the other hand was, for Kojève, equal to the conscious human being as a temporal and historical self. The object must be revealed by the subject's consciousness in order to appear in its objectivity – but correspondingly, the subject does not know or reveal anything, if this is not a knowledge of a real entity.<sup>197</sup> But how does this interaction between subject and object take place according to

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<sup>195</sup> "Einheit der Identität mit der Verschiedenheit", *WL II*, p. 42. [*SL*, p. 358].

<sup>196</sup> *SD*, p. 65.

<sup>197</sup> Kojève (1980), pp. 151-152.

Kojève, and how can it complete itself? What becomes of spirit as the resolution of this dichotomy?

For him, the section of *PhG* where the answer to this could be obtained, also being the key section of the work according to this reading, was the passage in which Hegel's statement that "self-consciousness is Desire" is found.<sup>198</sup> To many interpreters, this concept is overcome with the concept of spirit, but in Kojève's view, this definition of self-consciousness must be understood as the feature that explains the human being's interaction with itself and its world throughout history, and *as* history.

For him, immediate self-identity is a state belonging to nature, as a characteristic and strive of the animal to preserve itself from dispersion. But human desire is distinguished by its inability to be satisfied by mere self-preservation. Because its temporality is a negativity, the negativity of self-consciousness, it is both a state of ontological separateness from objects and other subjects, and the consciousness of this void. This establishes consciousness as a desire for that which is not itself. In this desire, it becomes self-aware, for in knowing that it is distinct from the desired object or subject, it is thrown back on itself. Desire is in this respect the condition for the experience of self-consciousness, as the desire to bridge its gap and bring it together with itself in identity, an identity unattainable by the animal or in the animal state.<sup>199</sup>

With this interpretation, Kojève settled a reading of Hegel that has coined a significant part of the forthcoming interpretations of his thinking, as well as other elaborations on the concept and problem of identity. Being, understood as that which unifies subject and object in the I, announced in the ontological, speculative copula, and thus irreducible to thingness, is no longer visible in this account. Rather than the state or mode of unity in which the dichotomy of subjectivity and objectivity is sublated, it now implies the objectivity of thingness that opposes human subjectivity. Hence, developed spirit is now "*synthesis* of (objective) being and its (subjective) Revelation",<sup>200</sup> or simply "the coincidence of Subject and Object (or as Hegel says: of the *Selbst* and the *Sein*)".<sup>201</sup> Kojève's concern is thus self-consciousness' desire to instate itself in the world of things. But in contrast to Hegel, he does not acknowledge that this strive for mediated identity is essentially ambiguous: on the one hand, self-consciousness' strive is to attain and appropriate the objective world, including its own objectivity, in order to make itself at home in it. On the other, it remains a strive for being as that force or mode

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<sup>198</sup> "es [Selbstbewußtsein] ist *Begierde*.", *PhG*, p. 143. [*PS*, ¶ 174, p. 109].

<sup>199</sup> Kojève (1980), p. 5.

<sup>200</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

which lies between subject and object. In Kojève's reading, consciousness remains desire in the sense of a longing for the objective world as such. And so Butler argues:

Kojève distinguishes *desire* as the only mode through which the human subject can express and know itself. Desire distinguishes human subjects as reflexive structures; it is the condition of self-externalization and self-understanding. Desire is “the origin of the ‘I’ revealed by speech” [ref. to Kojève (1980), p. 3]; desire prompts the linguistic subject into self-reference. [...] desire both forms and reveals subjectivity.<sup>202</sup>

Butler cites how desire for Kojève is a “revealed nothing”,<sup>203</sup> a negative or negating intentionality without a preceding teleological structure. According to this interpretation, “nothing” would imply that *nothing in particular* determines desire, that desire creates “out of nothing”, and is regulated only by itself. Nothing is a void to be filled by the free and determining power of self-consciousness. For Butler, this is the definitive shattering of the “ontological harmony” in Hegel, where negativity was superseded by a more encompassing form of being. Instead, desire now “indicates an ontological difference between consciousness and its world which, for Kojève, *cannot* be overcome” before history reaches its end.<sup>204</sup>

However, the circumstance that desire is regulated solely “by itself” for Kojève means that it is regulated by its creations and relations in the social, historical world – by the desire of *others*. Kojève's interpretation continues to highlight how the direction and ultimate satisfaction of this desire involves a world which includes the desire of the consciousness that I myself am not. Human desire cannot be satisfied unless it is recognized and desired by another desire; by another self-consciousness. Desire must direct itself towards *itself* to achieve its satisfaction, by way of the desire of another human being.<sup>205</sup> And one can only be recognized as desire, when the desire has externalized itself through a transformation of the object captured by it, rather than the consummation or destruction of the same entity. For Kojève, this is the origin of the creation of science, art, knowledge and all other similar artefacts constituting the human world, as well as its history. It is through these creations that consciousness can be desired at all, and so “Human history is the history of the desired Desires”.<sup>206</sup>

The Hegelian conception of history is thereby radically altered, now understood as man's attainment of himself by way of intersubjective interaction. In this respect, the chapter on self-

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<sup>202</sup> *SD*, p. 66.

<sup>203</sup> Kojève (1980), p. 5.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 69.

<sup>205</sup> Kojève (1980), pp. 5-6.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

consciousness and the question of recognition has, since this Kojèvian reading, functioned as a site where any anthropological interpretation of Hegel can be carried out.<sup>207</sup> Tuija Pulkkinen summarizes this in a concise manner when arguing that while the primary theme of recognition in Hegel is spirit's recognition of *itself*, as human consciousness, nature and history, and above all as thought, Kojève shifts the focus to the intersubjective recognition between human beings. To him, “the desire for social recognition” is the most importance characteristic of this being.<sup>208</sup> On the basis of his intersubjectively determined subjectivity, man enacts history. He becomes himself through the mutual recognition among subjects, recognizing one another and hence themselves as human, self-reflexive consciousnesses.

The strife of recognition, of self-consciousness' desire to be desired by means of the products of its negativity, naturally corresponds to the strife between the lord and the bondsman. In Kojève's view, this inequality is not merely a stage in the development of self-consciousness, which is overcome in the next chapter, but an important characterization of history itself: in so far as human beings are historical, they are either subjecting their human desire, or subjecting the desire of another; they are either recognizing, or being recognized. Within history, there can be no mutual recognition.<sup>209</sup>

For Kojève, time is concrete history, as time only exists through human desire. To desire is to anticipate the future. In so far, desire is the movement towards the future, and as this motion is not empty and self-consuming, but concrete and creative, it constitutes history.<sup>210</sup> Butler writes: “As the efficacious transformation of biological or natural givens, historical action is the mode through which the world of substance is recast as the world of the subject.”<sup>211</sup> As long as man desires, time persists, and historical relations will be formed as relationships between lords and bondsmen.<sup>212</sup> As long as man is negativity, as the gap of his self-consciousness remains, he is subjected to the other. For Kojève however, an end of history as a final achievement of mutual recognition is not only possible, but ultimately necessary. By this, an occurrence is envisaged where man has achieved a mediated, human identity. The

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<sup>207</sup> Axel Honneth's *Kampf um Anerkennung* is another contemporary, influential intersubjectivity-oriented rejection of the significance of the notion of spirit in Hegelian recognition. Honneth focuses on Hegel's *Jena Writings*, claiming that their thematization of the theme of recognition is richer and more socio-philosophically relevant than the account found in *PhG*. This relevance, he claims, is lost in the latter work, where the struggle for recognition merely serves as a means by which the development of self-consciousness is brought out. Axel Honneth, *Kampf um Anerkennung* (1992), pp.103-105.

<sup>208</sup> Tuija Pulkkinen, “Differing Spirits – Reflections on Hegelian Inspiration in Feminist Theory”, K. Hutchings and T. Pulkkinen (eds.), *Hegel's Philosophy and Feminist Thought* (2010), p. 24.

<sup>209</sup> Kojève (1980), pp. 40-45.

<sup>210</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 134-136.

<sup>211</sup> *SD*, p. 68.

<sup>212</sup> Kojève (1980), pp. 43-44.

presupposition is man's recognition of the very structure of his striving, of his own consciousness and of history as a universal matter. In this way would a corresponding recognition of the multiplicity of self-consciousness be possible. At the end of history, man has discovered himself by virtue of the structure of his own self-reflexivity, and revealed how this includes the self-reflexivity of others.<sup>213</sup> Desire is satisfied.

As Roman-Lagerspetz argues, this would entail the sublation of all decisive difference. Human beings are here no longer judged according to their natural identity, and thus there can be no more conflicts originating from human desire. What we understand as conflicts are namely struggles about “the universal truth about the subject” – and not just the subject, I would add, but the object and the relations between subject and object as such. Therefore, she continues, there are no more positions of particularity here.<sup>214</sup> Butler summarizes it with the following words:

The end to teleological history is the beginning of human action governed by a self-determining telos. In this sense, the end of history is the beginning of a truly anthropocentric universe. In Kojève's words, it is the revelation of “Man”, or, perhaps more descriptively, of human subjectivity.<sup>215</sup>

The decisive with this rendition of Hegel, is in summary that the unity of spirit here is claimed as the assertion of the kind of subjectivity and consciousness that Hegel attempted to deconstruct with the same concept. The concept of a Hegelian absolute identity of subject and object, appears to lead back to the premise that Hegel in fact strived to overcome, namely, the grasp of identity as an enactment performed by the primordial division of self-consciousness.

Identity in Kojève's account is consequently not an unveiled, recollected truth in the original Hegelian respect, but a subjectively *produced* matter. Although this development of history towards its own end is the *telos* of the human kind also for Kojève, this *telos* does not, according to him, emerge from a dimension that surpasses the human subject, be it in terms of a God or spirit. On Kojève's reading, self-consciousness becomes itself through asserting itself in the world, somehow overcoming its diremption on the basis of this self-positing. An overcoming of self-consciousness as such is in other words no longer the aim of identity. In accordance with this line of interpretation, self-dispersal is not implied in the historical gaze and mode of being where the determinate other can be eternally recognized. The focus on desire

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<sup>213</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237.

<sup>214</sup> Roman-Lagerspetz (2009), p. 137.

<sup>215</sup> *SD*, p. 65.

forms the basis for the interpretative turn from spirit to the human subject. Desire is apprehended as the force that transforms being, as the latter unveils itself as an object for a subject. Hence, desire itself is thought to produce the ontological relations in which the human is involved. Accordingly, man reaches his own essence through ceasing to oppose himself to the world, in the satisfaction of his desire. With this, he has instated his self-consciousness in the world.

Yet, man is here nevertheless told to overcome himself as a subject, or what Kojève calls an “error” standing opposed to the object, through returning into their unity. But is this possible? In what respect can the subject give up itself in the very assertion of itself? This question inaugurates Butler’s re-appropriation of both Kojève and Hegel. Now turning to her thinking, we approach the question which founds her figure of ambiguous identity anew: If the subject, by way of its temporal openness, is completely dependent on the other to uphold its identity, can this subject and its corresponding identity be sustained – or is it forever claimed by History as the conglomerate of the desire of others?

## **2. Butler’s adaptation of Kojève and the subject of desire**

For Butler, the imperative and context behind Kojève’s interpretation of Hegel must be understood as a contemporaneous situation “characterized by dislocalization, metaphysical rupture, and the ontological isolation of the human subject”. In this context, Kojève poses the question of whether the satisfaction of human desire is still conceivable, and how it could be defined. The issue is in other words if Hegelian identity is still a possibility, or even graspable.<sup>216</sup> What are the conditions of identity in the modern world? There is a hermeneutical complication already in the formulation of this problem, for why is modernity characterized by dislocalization, metaphysical ruptures and the isolation of the human subject to begin with? In the following chapters, I will attempt to show how the account of the arrival and origin of this situation must be brought out together with the response to it.

Following Kojève’s lectures, desire, as the force of spatiotemporally situated identity, is a vital conception for Butler as well. As Roman-Lagerspetz argues, Butler’s appropriation of Hegel remains Kojévian. Like Kojève, Butler holds the view that the significance of desire as a concept in *PhG* is not limited to the section of lordship and bondage, but is a constituent of the whole mediating process of this work, being its “logical motor”.<sup>217</sup> According to Hegel,

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<sup>216</sup> *SD*, p. 6.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

she holds, extrinsic deviation always ends up as an inner dynamic of the subject of *PhG*, thus revealing a unity that can be incorporated by this subject. On the basis of Hegel's own concept of desire, this is the Hegelian belief that she calls into question through her adherence to the Kojévian lectures.<sup>218</sup> In modern philosophy, desire will denote the ontological rupture, and finally the *failure* of the subject and its identity.<sup>219</sup> In the concretion of intersubjectively mediated desire, she continues further on, the I, for Kojève, first *appears*; subjectivity is simultaneously generated and known.<sup>220</sup> In other words, the subject does not precede its desires, but is defined by them and their intentionality.<sup>221</sup>

Through this interpretation, Butler sheds light on Kojève's standpoint that consciousness does not discover a primordial or pre-given ontological identity, but creates identity out of the yield of its own desires. In the introduction to *SD*, Butler comments on the comprehension of the satisfaction of desire as a transformation of difference into identity with the following words: "it is the discovery of the strange and novel as familiar, the arrival of the awaited, the reemergence of what has been absent or lost".<sup>222</sup> In contrast to this, Butler's theoretical position rests upon an argument against this Kojévian conclusion, holding that an enactment of identity of this kind sustains a tension which cannot be overcome: the tension between the foreign subjectivity, and the own. As desire according to Kojève's account ultimately is the desire to be coveted in one's own, specific relation to the objects in question, the human being is by way of this feature exposed to other subjects. Self-consciousness, Butler holds, longs to expand itself, but finds itself claimed by another. Yet at the same time, this other turns out to be the *condition* for this expansion.<sup>223</sup> For this reason, the other must be grasped as both the subject and the object of one's desire.<sup>224</sup> In recognizing the other, we recognize intersubjectivity as a condition of subjectivity.

The finitude of this intersubjectively oriented subject given, historicity is the decisive sphere of all identity formation for Butler as well. But it is from the viewpoint of historicity that Butler also brings out her critique of Kojève. Following her argumentation, our temporality emerges as an intersection with the temporality of a history that is already "there",

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<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 66.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

<sup>222</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9. The quotation comments on a section in Jean Hyppolite's *Etudes sur Marx et Hegel*, where desire in Hegel is understood to be "the power of the negative in human life". Transl. from the French by J. O'Neill as *Studies on Hegel and Marx* (1969), p. 27.

<sup>223</sup> *SD.*, p. 49.

<sup>224</sup> *UG*, p. 138.

which does not belong to the own subject primarily. The formation of an identity is to be grasped in terms of a response to previous or contemporary voices of history, as a re-enactment of their potentiality. Adhering to Kojève in this respect, she too appropriates human subjectivity as an abiding foundation of collective temporality. The most significant feature of this branch of Hegelianism thus turns out to be the insurmountability of subjectivity. Human “action does not indicate a prior and more inclusive reality as its ground – action *is* the ground of history”. In these and the following lines, the direction of Butler's interpretation of Kojève's scheme is most clearly stated: “the ultimate project of desire is less a dialectical assimilation of subjectivity to the world, and the world to subjectivity, than a unilateral action upon the world in which consciousness instates itself as the generator of historical reality”.<sup>225</sup>

Following this, Butler does not adhere to the Kojévian understanding of self-identity in terms of an end of history, that is, an attainment of a historical position where subjects and objects are eternally illuminated, brought out in their connectedness to the particular, desiring subject in question. Upon her reading, self-identity in terms of an inner reconciliation of the subject with itself, as well as the identity of the allness of world and history, are according to the *PhG* itself conceptions without ontological and social bearing. Our historical and structural exposure to others is constant. We can never claim to recognize and illuminate the other in any final respect, while recognition is to recognize this other *as* other, as a particular subject whose possibilities are not yet written, and whose past and present are never fully accessible to us.<sup>226</sup> Accordingly, in recognizing the opacity of the other, we continuously recognize and become overwhelmed by an infinite number of possibilities and new aspects of ourselves. This is the factualness that continues to create us throughout life, a factualness that cannot be exhausted.

Put differently, that which is constitutive of the self remains logically and ontologically external to it, because it does not share its temporality or subjectivity. “The self” is “the author of the Other”, but this other is reciprocally the creator of this self.<sup>227</sup> Further, if being historical is to have one's origin in the opaque other, then this other, in turn, also originates from *its* other. Through this difference, we are engaged with the other in an ontologically primordial respect. In the *PhG* itself, Butler claims, the subject gives up its clarity as its constitution changes along with the definition of the absolute.<sup>228</sup> While subjectivity is the foundation of

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<sup>225</sup> *SD*, p. 69.

<sup>226</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 74.

<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 196.

history for Butler, it is redefined as a continuous self-externalization through intersubjectivity. History, together with the dialectic of the lord- and bondsman founding it, must accordingly continue to be as long as man is.

According to Butler, the ambiguity of Hegel's metaphysics consists of this potentiality of an endless openness in a supposedly all-including, unifying system. In order to bring out this potential, Butler proposes an "Althusserian reversal of Hegel". This would entail a view of recognition as that which first constitutes the subject. The subject is not an entity that is already there, waiting to be recognized. It exists as "interpellated", as given an identity by way of social recognition. Being identified according to the one or the other category or universal, it is ascribed something to which it must relate itself. One cannot, she argues, imagine a subject first located outside of the world, and then subsequently thrown into it.<sup>229</sup> An interesting contrast to the Hegel explored in chapters two and three hereby emerges. According to my reading, the particular universals that for Hegel bind the individuals to one another in a common world are not to be understood as the creations of human subjects, but manifestations of revealed, collective spirit. Spirit is sustained by the finite life of historically existing subjects, but it is not generated by the immediate judgment of self-consciousness. Hence, when bringing out the subject as the very center of his philosophy, the consequence is an understanding of identity as something subjected to the agencies of previous subjects, distant in timespace.

With this step, we are approaching a focus in Butler's view of identity and historicity that will also attain a political dimension, both complicating and further explaining the problem in question. In interpellation, it is manifested that the norms reigning at a specific time in history are necessarily limited. They illuminate something at the cost of something else. As Butler expresses it, they necessitate a simultaneous "abjection" of other forms of recognition, and thus constitute what we apprehend as norms: "One 'exists' not only by virtue of being recognized, but, in a prior sense, by being *recognizable*."<sup>230</sup> That by means of which we are recognized as human beings is created in a social sphere and is therefore mutable – a matter that Hegel according to her did not acknowledge.<sup>231</sup> At the same time, it must be remembered that her rejection of the notion of a formal and a-temporal recognition in *CHU* also is deduced from Hegel himself. In an interpretation of his account of the ethical world of *Antigone*, she holds this section to be demonstrating that recognition and identity rest upon pre-given ethical

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<sup>229</sup> Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech* (1997), p. 5.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>231</sup> *UG*, p. 2.

laws or norms.<sup>232</sup> In *GaA* Butler writes: “The possibility of the ‘I’, of speaking and knowing the ‘I’, resides in a perspective that dislocates the first-person perspective it conditions.”<sup>233</sup> This perspective in which the possibility of the ‘I’ resides is however not the immediate perspective of the other, as interaction *presupposes* norms that surpass the battle of recognition in which the adversaries are involved. The one recognizing the I is already dependent upon pre-existing patterns for acknowledgment, enabling a “judging [of] who I am as well”.<sup>234</sup> For Butler, the judgment of who one is – the knowledge of the own identity, as well as the other's – depends on structures stemming from the very framework of intersubjectivity. The subject is submitted to itself through the other.

With this turn, the concept of self-consciousness is unsettled, since it is not necessarily myself that I know in this awareness: “The price of self-knowledge will be self-loss.”<sup>235</sup> The meaning of the speculative copula is hence both illuminated and obscured: the Hegelian subject gradually mirrors itself in the world, while simultaneously coming to be through its dispersion in it.<sup>236</sup> In opposition to Hegel's thought, the copula is here unable to uphold its revealing characteristic, instead obfuscating the relations that it expresses.

This means that the principle of identity no longer should be understood as an enactment of lucidity. “I am I” ultimately means that I am something intersubjectively shaped, something of which I cannot give an account – not because it is other than the human and its mind, but because it is a category or a universal created in a social context the origin of which I do not have a part. The law of identity as self-knowledge would according to this interpretation lose its function of passage to a disclosure of a primary truth about the being of the I. Instead, it remains the formula of a performative creation of identity, but now in the awareness of the inaccessibility of its foundation. In stating that I belong to the one or the other category or universality, that I am this category, I instate or confirm myself as a subject in the world. Yet there is no *necessary* connection revealed between the subject and the predicate of the judgment; they are not bound together by spirit or being. In this respect, the I “fails” in its identity. The desire for recognition, on its part, must therefore preserve its own longing for unity. It cannot be satisfied.<sup>237</sup>

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<sup>232</sup> *CHU*, p. 20.

<sup>233</sup> *GaA*, p. 28.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>235</sup> *UG*, pp. 147-148.

<sup>236</sup> *SD*, p. 8.

<sup>237</sup> *GaA*, p. 43.

Consequently, the temporality of history is understood as perpetually interrupting the temporality of one's life,<sup>238</sup> “the time of discourse” failing to “memorialize my agency”.<sup>239</sup> In this respect, the strive for identity is impossible, and yet an endeavor that we seemingly cannot omit.

### **3. Foucault: addressing the locality and temporality of power**

This ek-stasis of the subject, yielding itself as a constitutive difference, is not merely a neutral ontological condition in Butler's view. For with the permanentizing of the lord- and bondship-dialectic, this ek-stasis likewise entails the subjugation of the subject. The problem of *power* comprises the foundation of the tension of identity.

In grounding my identity in a norm or a term that is not generated by myself, I am, according to Butler, also subjected to this term, indirectly stamped by the other. Although this is an ontological situation, this stamping is also something political to her – a claim that creates a peculiar intersection between the levels of ontology and politics. As shown, the problem that this intersection generates is visible as the question of whether the appropriation of a norm entails (political) repression, or may be a representation of agency leading into the most own.

Butler has hitherto recognized several eternal, and thus what must be labelled ontological, traits of historical agency in Kojève, such as the already explicated ideal of recognition, negativity, and the complex of action.<sup>240</sup> To these characteristics she adds power. In fact, power is involved in all these characteristics, as they all are derived from history's feature of a permanent dialectic between lord and bondsman.

Inquiring into her usage and comprehension of the concept of power, we must now involve a question avoided by Butler herself, namely the question of the ultimate status of power. Does power as a fundamental condition for identity have an ontological, historical, or political origin? What interests me here, is the question of why power is claimed to be the exclusive way to relate oneself to identity, and if this definition is historically specific or not. Could identity ever be grasped in terms of something other than power? Within Butler's account, power is always bound up with social relations, and never to be observed as a transcendent substance beyond them. Nevertheless, she continuously indicates the ubiquitous and possibly

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<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 35, 39.

<sup>239</sup> Judith Butler and Vikki Bell, “On Speech, Race and Melancholia.”, *Theory, Culture & Society* (1999), Vol. 16 (2), p. 166.

<sup>240</sup> *SD*, p. 75.

eternal quality of power, as it is considered to be the permanent framework for all historical, social relations, and for identity formation.

This understanding of historicity as power is developed under the direct influence of Foucault. His great contribution to this topic, Butler argues in *SD*, is his questioning of the binary model of power as subjugation contrasting unbounded freedom.<sup>241</sup> Following his thought, power is not only that which subjugates, but equally that which endows us with a subjectivity to begin with. In this respect, it is not something that is possessed by one agent and exercised over another.

But how is this possible, and what ontological status would power have in this account? In the following, Foucault's comprehension of this phenomenon will be further explicated.

First, it can be apprehended as a revision of the logic of the lord- and bondsman-chapter in *PhG*. In an interview from 1975, Foucault argued that:

The Hegelian master-slave dialectic is the mechanism by which the power of the master disappears while he exercises this power. On the contrary I would like to show that the power intensifies by way of its own practice; power does not change on the other side secretly.<sup>242</sup>

For Foucault, execution of power amplifies rather than inverts itself. But what is execution of power for him to begin with? From where does it originate, and what is its target?

Emblematically, he stated that the *what* of power only can be exhibited through its *how*. In an essay with the title “The Subject and Power” from 1982, written to clarify this concept, he claims that his aim never was to grasp power as a process or as something essential, nor to provide with the ground for an inquiry of this kind, but to “create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects”.<sup>243</sup> With the phrase “our culture”, however, the status of power immediately becomes something questionable. I will return to this.

Claiming to have focused on the subject and not power, the subject is, for Foucault, nevertheless something inseparable from its power relations; it manifests nothing other than contingent, specific historical conditions and relations of power. Never was power a phenomenon

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<sup>241</sup> *SD*, p. 219.

<sup>242</sup> “Michel Foucault. El filósofo responde“; discussion with Michel Foucault, Claudio Bojunga und Reinaldo Lobo in *Jornal da Tarde*, 1. November 1975, pp. 12-13. Translation by Holden Kelm in: “The transformation of a problem – Michel Foucault’s and Judith Butler’s reception of Hegel concerning the notion of the subject” (2009), p. 3. Kelm’s translation is based on the German translation of the discussion from *Jornal da Tarde*, found in Michel Foucault, *Schriften, Bd. 2* (2002), p. 1057.

<sup>243</sup> Michel Foucault, “The Subject and Power”, *Critical Inquiry* (1982), Vol. 8 (4), p. 777.

beyond these social relations, Foucault claims – but neither was the subject. His representations of these phenomena expose a concept encompassing both, only accessible in the historical manifestations of it, conveyed throughout his works. This conceptualization of power is the reason that we hardly find any systematic account of the theme in Foucault.

Likewise, these manifestations include the account of their own genesis, of what appears to be the genesis of power itself. In *Discipline and Punish: the Birth of the Prison*, written 1975, he portrays the transition from sovereign power used as a tool to reign over subordinates, to the modern form of power in which he also locates his own endeavor – so-called disciplinary or, later, bio- power. Arisen around the end of the 18th century or the beginning of the 19th, disciplinary power formed, according to Foucault, the institution of the modern prison, where the object of punishment no longer was the crime, but the *person*: his soul. Prison now became the means to correct the “inwardness” of the prisoner, thus first creating this interiority. Through turning the passion or power that the prisoner had exerted in the crime towards himself, this passion could be tamed into a soul.<sup>244</sup> This meant that there were no means to distinguish between a primordial interiority of the convict, and the power directed against him. A form of power was born which, ironically, could be

exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free. By this we mean individual or collective subjects who are faced with a field of possibilities in which several ways of behaving, several reactions and diverse comportments, may be realized. Where the determining factors saturate the whole, there is no relationship of power; slavery is not a power relationship when man is in chains.<sup>245</sup>

In other words, this modern form of power does not threaten freedom, but yields the space for it. It is identity-*producing*.

The thesis is further developed from another perspective in the first volume of *The History of Sexuality*. This work presents how the regulations of power active in the Victorian era, seemingly “repressing” sexuality, in reality were exactly the regulations rousing it,<sup>246</sup> giving it the status of an identity-yielding force – a force still active today, when we claim the libera-

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<sup>244</sup> Michel Foucault, *Surveiller et punir: Naissance de la prison*. Transl. from the French by A. Sheridan (1995), pp. 16, 29-30.

<sup>245</sup> Foucault (1982), p. 790.

<sup>246</sup> Michel Foucault, *Histoire de la sexualité. La volonté de savoir*. Transl. from the French by R. Hurley (1978), pp. 12-13, 47.

tion of sexuality or of the sexes.<sup>247</sup> Power is nothing but invested desire, the desire of desire to amplify itself by means of regulations.

Is modern power, then, a mere politico-historical matter, provoked by certain arrangements in the social sphere in modernity? Is it contingent in the respect that we could strive for a conception of identity liberated from power? Seemingly, this could not be the case, taken that Foucault's theory of power also claims to describe what appears to be a permanent foundation for all subject and identity formation. The originality of his account is found in the repeated assertion that there is no position unaffected by power. No resistance or re-working of power structures can overthrow the fact that power is the very condition of life, thought and subjectivity. In "The Order of Discourse", held as an inaugural lecture at the Collège de France 1970, and the first text in which Foucault explicitly speaks of "discourse" as power, he connects power to speech as such. We can here recall that to speak and think presupposes the ability to discern or judge. Judgment, in turn, implies that something is brought to light at the cost of something else; where a thought, a statement or a feeling is expressed, another one is disregarded, or left unnoticed. Discourse is consequently the linguistic framework employed at a certain historical moment, regulating what can and cannot be thought of, known and spoken at this point in time. As framing and deciding what can be articulated, discourse yields power: "The prohibitions that surround it very soon reveal its link with desire and with power."<sup>248</sup> Discourse, Foucault argues, is not only that which manifests and hides desires, but is the object of desire. As a creation of desire, something like a "true" discourse would be unthinkable. We observe a resonance with Hegel and Kojève, who both held that discourse is the artefact of the original difference between subject and object – that is, of judgment.

But for Foucault, this is nevertheless accessible only as a political question, not an ontological-philosophical. There is more than one indication that Foucault holds the historical occurrence of the rise of modern power to be a political phenomenon. The hermeneutical challenge here is accordingly to grasp what political means in this context, as this domain in fact seems to *lead back* to ontology in his thinking. Bio- or disciplinary power is not understood as generated by the one or the other person, side, stance or group. It is rather something that both announces itself as, and arises from, an "in-between" subjects, insofar as they interact. A claim to possess or own power as a subject would once again imply a preceding, substantial subject using power as an external tool. Although this form of power – the sovereign power –

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<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 34, 77-78, and 131.

<sup>248</sup> Foucault, "The Order of Discourse", R. Young (ed), *Untying the Text* (1981), p. 52.

also has existed and still exists to some extent, this is not the type of power that is in question here. In *Discipline and Punish* he contends that although we might identify a system with a superior topmost, this does not constitute the essence of the power of this system. Modern power consists of the net of relations within the same system. Returning to Butler's appropriation of this, it becomes clear that the other on which the subject according to her is dependent for its identity, is an abstraction. Drawing on Foucault's account, the other as a particular, concrete subject could in fact never be the origin of power, exactly because it is already framed by it. As has been demonstrated, Butler also holds that the acknowledgement of the other as a concrete, singular person is dependent on pre-existing structures of recognizability, that it is never the present, embodied other that is responsible for the frameworks of power. And yet, at the same time, it is also the concrete encounter with the embodied other that according to Butler shatters self-identity, since both the I and the other, through their very bodily existence and exposedness, exercise power in this encounter. Referring to Levinas' "face-to-face" encounter, Butler interprets the other in Levinas "as belonging to an idealized dyadic structure of social life. The other's actions 'address' me in the sense that those actions belong to an Other who is irreducible, whose 'face' makes an ethical demand upon me. [...] For Levinas, however, the demand is even greater: 'precisely the Other who persecutes me has a face' ".<sup>249</sup> So, power here on the one hand resides in a structure that enables the difference and encounter between I and other, but on the other hand it is executed by a factual other.

With this, we begin to discern a contradiction in both Butler and Foucault. Again, Foucault, as well as Butler, hold that power must be challenged as a political matter, not only in its various constellations, but altogether. In "The Subject and Power", Foucault exemplifies how power works politically in different ways and by means of different institutions in modernity, but states that the target must be the very technique that generates subjects that fit into these spheres, not the institutions in particular.<sup>250</sup> Contradictory, then, is the following statement: "let us not deceive ourselves; if we speak of the structures or the mechanisms of power, it is only insofar as we suppose that certain persons exercise power over others. The term 'power' designates relationships between partners".<sup>251</sup> Foucault thus admits that the political aspect of power necessarily must be regarded as a relation between particular human beings as well, and as such it must be addressed and challenged. Hence, power would after all be something which is exerted by a person over another person.

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<sup>249</sup> *GaA*, p. 90.

<sup>250</sup> Foucault (1982), p. 781.

<sup>251</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 786.

But if being political in this respect, have we not located the problem in decisions emanating from agents, decisions possible to alter through new, concrete, political decisions? Was power not the very mode of being of a subject? We clearly appear to be moving in a circle. At the same time as it is ubiquitous, power could according to Foucault be politically resisted as such, from a mode qualitatively different from power: power is ultimately, Foucault holds, not a destiny in the core of a society.<sup>252</sup> The same suggestion, that it is power as such that is to be resisted or even overthrown, is made by Butler. In *PLP*, for instance, she holds that the task is to form an opposition to power,<sup>253</sup> to its “abuses”.<sup>254</sup> The problem would then be how an abuse of power even could be identified, given the circumstance that everything in being is power. What is the measure by means of which the abuses may be framed? If power indeed is creating us, our values and our being, then the question of which voice within us, which judgment and impetus that could interrogate itself as a result of the regime of power as such, remains unanswered.

Yet, this unclarity of the status of power, is, I would argue, not to be understood as a result of an oversight on the part of Foucault, but as a consequence of the inherent mechanisms of power.

I will now proceed with a view on Foucault's most systematic text on history, namely his “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History”, a work that explicates what we could call the collapse of all the dimensions of power and subject formation that have been investigated so far.

A comprehension of Foucault's view on history demands a mentioning of the method by which he approaches history as an object of knowledge, namely the Nietzschean version of genealogy. The same approach is employed by Butler in her deconstructions of the subject and history.

For Foucault, genealogy means to sacrifice the perspective on history as a linear succession, and open up to the view of it as a question of the coincidence and multiplicity of desires without a common orbit. The purpose of history and historical knowledge when guided by genealogy, is not to discover the conditions of our identity in the present, but to undergo the dispersion of this identity. In this respect, Foucault claims, genealogy separates the I, deprives it of oneness.<sup>255</sup>

In a dense section, he explains his understanding of origins in the following manner:

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<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 791.

<sup>253</sup> *PLP*, p. 17.

<sup>254</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 20.

<sup>255</sup> Michel Foucault, *Nietzsche, la genealogie, l'histoire*. Transl. from the French by D. F. Bouchard and S. Simon as “Nietzsche, Genealogy, History”, P. Rabinow (ed), *The Foucault Reader* (1984), p. 81.

Emergency is thus the entry of forces; it is their eruption [...] What Nietzsche calls the *Entstehungsherd* of the concept of goodness is not specifically the energy of the strong or the reaction of the weak, but precisely this scene where they are displayed superimposed or face-to-face. It is nothing but the space that divides them, the void through which they exchange their threatening gestures and speeches. As descent qualifies the strength or weakness of an instinct and its inscription on a body, emergence designates a place of confrontation, but not as a closed field offering the spectacle of a struggle among equals. Rather, as Nietzsche demonstrates in his analysis of good and evil, it is a “non-place”, a pure distance, which indicates that the adversaries do not belong to a common space. Consequently, no one is responsible for an emergence; no one can glory in it, since it always occurs in the interstice. In a sense, only a single drama is ever staged in this “non-place”, the endlessly repeated play of dominations. [...] This relationship of domination is not more a “relationship” than the place where it occurs is a place.<sup>256</sup>

According to Butler's interpretation, this section displays Foucault's explicit appropriation and re-consideration of the chapter on the lord and the bondsman in *PhG*,<sup>257</sup> as it argues that domination not merely is a phase in history, but its ground.<sup>258</sup> Domination fortifies the strife of history, and deprives it of a resolution, synthesis, *telos* or common ground. What we have here is ultimately an undetermined origin in the form of a social confrontation, where the question of which of these subjects that could be said to commence the conflict, collapses. As they cannot be conceived of as agents of history, as the agent is power itself, the origin is a perpetual motion between these subjects, without beginning or end in the form of a final attribution of agency to any of them.

For Foucault, power is therefore inscribed in the structure of history, in terms of its genesis. Power is a creation of history itself precisely because it does not emerge from an already established or given common space or context – a space such as this is rather the consequence of its struggles. But these creations or places, in turn, engender power relations of various kinds, of both violent and non-violent nature. A similar view of this “event” is developed in “The Order of Discourse”.<sup>259</sup> And so the genealogical search for this event itself means to be involved in the struggles of power, where the intersection of the political, the ontological and the historical level is deepened. Foucault does not give an account of it in this text, but it seems logical to assume that modernity, with its specific form of power, is yielded as an event of this kind. But what would this event be, that both confirms history's character of power,

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<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 84-85.

<sup>257</sup> *SD*, p. 180.

<sup>258</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182.

<sup>259</sup> Foucault (1981), p. 66.

and first conceptualizes it as such? When conceiving of history as power, this circularity does not seem possible to avoid. Perhaps, then, the leading question at this moment must change, now addressing if this way to view history, to be in history, in itself could be a trait of the historical event understood as modernity.

To develop both this question and its possible answer, we must first return to Butler and her appropriation of Foucault's notion of power. More precisely, we will see in what way power, according to her, constitutes the capacity for self-reflection in the subject, founding its self-enactment.

#### **4. Creating identity: the enactment of the subject in *Gender Trouble* and *The Psychic Life of Power***

*GT* is undertaken as a genealogical study of gender identity. As such, it does not address how these categories are imposed upon a core of gender neutrality or a “third” gender beyond the duality, but how they come to comprise and define the whole subject. In identifying the primary subject categories as the gender duality, she proceeds from Foucault's account of sexuality. Power, she argues, produces and hence liberates sexuality as well as the sex as such, compelling the subject to identify itself with a specific type of sexuality. She differs from Foucault through the fact that she does not admit the possibility to liberate a “multiplicity of pleasures” from the defined sex, something which constituted a goal for identity formation in Foucault's works.<sup>260</sup> For her, this kind of identity beyond power is altogether unattainable. In this manner, she consummates the consequences of Foucault's own theory, emphasizing the circumstance that we, as linguistic, historical beings lack an access to a pre-linguistic and a-historical reality. For this reason, the liberation of an identity must proceed as a subversion or re-constitution of power. This re-constitution is for Butler performative exactly because new configurations of power, expressing an identity, come to exist at the moment in which they are acted out: they are not discoveries of a pre-given substantiality.

The decisive with this “rotation” of power, is however not its grade of external visibility, as the constitution of ostensibly new concepts, institutions or identity traits. A new configuration of subjectivity could of course manifest itself as a gender expression which does not conform to gender duality, and Butler displays a large interest in these manifestations.<sup>261</sup> But the interior dynamic of subversion consists in the subject's specific attunement to power. An at-

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<sup>260</sup> *GT*, p. 131.

<sup>261</sup> See “Doing Justice to Someone: Sex Reassignment and Allegories of Transsexuality” and “Undiagnosing Gender”, *UG*.

tunement to power which at the same time becomes an attunement to oneself, occurs when power is experienced as co-shaped by the subject in question, as being its “own” production, rather than just something imposed upon it. In *PLP*, Butler states that “A significant and potentially enabling reversal occurs when power shifts from its status as a condition of agency to the subject’s ‘own’ agency (constituting an appearance of power in which the subject appears as the condition of its ‘own’ power).”<sup>262</sup> Evidently, this is only possible because power will never coincide with the subject, but continues to constitute a difference within it.

Therefore, identity in the respect of self-enactment forms a permanent dilemma: “The mobilization of identity categories for the purposes of politicization always remain threatened by the prospect of identity becoming an instrument of the power one opposes.”<sup>263</sup> At the same time “That is no reason not to use, and be used, by identity. There is no political position purified by power, and perhaps that impurity is what produces agency as the potential interruption and reversal of regulatory regimes.”<sup>264</sup> This is a statement and a paradox to which Butler returns in all of her works. There is no permanent, objective measure in power itself, according to which its manifestations are either subjugating or creative. And similar to Foucault, she views it as a political matter.

It is in *PLP* that she continues to examine these double-edged mechanisms behind identity formation, this time as an explicit critique of Foucault, charging him with a neglect of this dynamics of the psyche.<sup>265</sup> In *CHU*, Butler claims that his understanding of the subject submits to either behaviorism or “a sociological notion of ‘internalization’”. In the first case, she holds, construction is conceived of in a mechanical manner, and in the second, the vacillations in these formations are left disregarded.<sup>266</sup> Hence, the leading question of *PLP* is instead how the subject is shaped by a repression that is also the condition for its subjectivity: how it becomes a subject that has the capacity to withstand the foreign imposition of power and bring forth its own identity *on the basis of* its subjection to power. In other words, the work both suggests and inquires into an alleged “primary repression”, to refer to an expression used in *GaA*.<sup>267</sup>

In this conception of power, the decisive concern is the reversal through which the power confronting the subject changes into a power which constitutes the agency of the same sub-

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<sup>262</sup> *PLP*, p. 12.

<sup>263</sup> *GT*, pp. xxvii-xxviii.

<sup>264</sup> *Ibid.*, p. xxviii.

<sup>265</sup> *PLP*, p. 2.

<sup>266</sup> *CHU*, p. 151.

<sup>267</sup> *GaA*, p. 71.

ject; the process through which power becomes the subject's "own".<sup>268</sup> It is on the basis of this turn from the subjugating, external character of power, to its identity-constituting quality, that the subject obtains an unclear ontological status, that makes it impossible to say whether power or subject comes first.<sup>269</sup>

Following Butler, the identity of the subject can therefore be viewed as conditioned by difference, as the difference between the subject and the power constituting it.<sup>270</sup> Power is not unequivocally "one's own", it does not coincide immediately with the subject.<sup>271</sup> This difference therefore constitutes the essence of the divergence between the subject and the other, as it is exactly through power structures that the subject is exposed to the presence and (historical) influence of others, in the form of norms.<sup>272</sup>

The contradiction found in Butler's theory is that power involved in identity constitution at the same time seems to be a force which blends into or is something equivalent to the *will* of the subject. The difference between the subject and power remains ambiguous, as it also suggests the possibility of grasping the relationship between them as a configuration where the subject's agency *produces* power, as something it wields and effects.<sup>273</sup> In this respect, the subject would be the root of power, rather than the opposite. The expression "a subject of power", Butler holds, suggests "both 'belonging to' and 'wielding' power".<sup>274</sup>

An important section in this account, further examining this contradictoriness, is her interpretation of Hegel's Unhappy Consciousness. Reading it as an independent philosophical trope, the Unhappy Consciousness is for Butler the figure of the separation between the body and the mind of consciousness; the negativity of its self-reflexivity comprised as the problem of finite and corporeal individuality. It is through this separation that the restraint of power is told to be evoked, the reason being the subject's existential fear of death, its experience of powerlessness in the face of its own finitude. Out of this distress, Butler holds, it generates a God who forces it to subject itself to an ethical law which repudiates corporeality and individuality. But the subordination to this law or norm "give[s] an ethical shape to the reflexivity of this emerging subject. [...] Absolute fear is thus displaced by the absolute law which, paradoxically, reconstituted the fear as a fear of the law".<sup>275</sup> For Butler, the condition of self-

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<sup>268</sup> *PLP*, p. 12.

<sup>269</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>270</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9; see also p. 16.

<sup>271</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>273</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>275</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

reflexivity is the force of a law restraining the free will or desire of the subject. With this account, Butler suggests, Hegel anticipates Foucault.<sup>276</sup>

Unlike Foucault, however, this interpretation of Hegel ultimately allows Butler to locate power in the subject *itself*. This deviation from Foucault is not thematized by Butler herself, but in the present inquiry it is an important fact, as the subject thus must be reconsidered as the explicit source of what is called power. The origin of power turns out to be the own psyche, the bending of the desire of this psyche. By way of a repression of itself, it is told to expand. This connection between the subject and power, where the latter now depends on the former, will be examined further in the chapters on Heidegger.

If the inability to accept and incorporate the own finitude is the reason for the subjection of the psyche, then this primary submission appears to be of ontological origin. As Heidegger has shown, facing death is a part of the ontology of the human being. But for Butler, strangely, this ontology immediately converts itself into a political subjection. The vague intersection between politics and ontology is repeated. Taken all her works together, it is, as with Foucault, not obvious whether it is the structure of self-reflexivity in itself that produces the political and historical dimensions of subjection, or if the opposite is the case. That something is political implies that it is a collective matter, something the origin of which emerges in historically specific interactions between human beings, and can be altered by new interactions. But the mechanisms of the psyche conveyed here, are not brought forth by such interactions, but are instead their framework and condition. The subjection we undergo by means of the existence of other subjects, is inscribed in the ontological structure of the subject.

We are left with the question of whether a political alteration of the phenomenon conceived of in terms of “the law” in fact would overthrow the very predicament of power.<sup>277</sup> If power is the name for the internal structure of both intersubjectivity and the psyche, this appears to be impossible. For this reason, every resistance would in itself be a matter of power, as, following Foucault, “power and discourse have become coextensive. If there is to be an emancipatory potential in discourse, it must consist of the transformation rather than the transcendence of power”.<sup>278</sup> On the other hand, the alteration of the law appears to be equal to the challenge of power as such for Butler, as this transformation seems to converge with the

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<sup>276</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>277</sup> In a manner similar to the argumentation of the present study, Robert Strozier holds that the law of male dominance and enforced heterosexuality remains of unclear origin for Butler. There is no clear statement as to whether it is a historical or an ontological structure, wherefore the difference collapses and the naturalness of gender categories in a way is reinstated. However, Strozier does not ask if this also applies to the understanding of history as power as such. Robert Strozier, *Foucault, Subjectivity and Identity* (2002), pp. 96-97.

<sup>278</sup> *SD*, p. 219.

opening of a wider range of possibilities for identity formation in her account.<sup>279</sup> This suggests that power, in the end, is understood both as a politico-historical phenomenon, a phenomenon characterizing our time, and as a remaining condition for subjectivity. The question left to be further explored, is thus if subjectivity understood as a foundation of identity, in itself is a historically determined reality?

### **5. Butler and Hegel differing**

With the return to Hegel through the trope of the Unhappy Consciousness and the issue of judgment, we must now examine more closely how Butler differs from Hegel. Why must fear of the own finitude lead to political subjection? What understanding of self-consciousness leads to this account?

For Hegel, the Unhappy Consciousness emerges from the immanent strive of consciousness to reconcile with itself, to attain a oneness where judgment is no longer entangled in the movement between subject and object. This consciousness is “unhappy” because of the opposition between unity and individuation, an opposition which at the same time is the presupposition for an appropriation of mediated identity. In this respect, the enduring of this opposition encompasses its own possible inversion. In the acceptance of its agony, in the enduring of the condition of finite individuation, consciousness can be granted unification with itself. The profound experience of the mortality of the own body is a source of a despair which releases an identity reconciled with the negativity of existence.

For this reason, the Unhappy Consciousness cannot be said to produce this negation or division through positing it as a law. Positing laws implies a use of judgment, and is thus on the one hand an expression of an existential and ontological nearness to being, on the other the necessary, perpetual “collapse” of this same being. The constitution of laws through judgment in themselves confirm the human striving towards a mode where the finitude of our existence is transcended or reconciled, but to which we have no direct access by means of this strive in its immediacy. Therefore, reading Hegel, consciousness’ assurance of its own law-positing judgment *is* the impulse that consolidates the primordial division as a state of *incomplete* negativity. This incompleteness is enacted exactly where consciousness retains the understanding of itself as the immediate center of identity, when it maintains the belief that it can come to terms with negativity through the exercise of judgment, giving itself its own laws. Only in the

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<sup>279</sup> See *GT*, pp. vii-viii.

full acceptance of this negation, an acceptance symbolically rendered as the dying Christ, can the individual restore its belonging to a unity that surpasses the finite body.

In other words, the ordeal of the Unhappy Consciousness is the discovery of the impossibility to enact a reconciled identity by way of the creation of discourse, laws, (objective) systems of thought or (subjective) valuations and opinions – by means of the whole activity of judgment – and to succumb to this impossibility. Put differently, it is a matter of giving up the impulse to deny mortality, to suspend the whole desire to maintain oneself in identity.

In contrast to Hegel, the judgments constituting and preserving history are in Butler clearly thought to be derived from other, preceding judgments, and thus from the power of self-consciousness *as* an arch-separation; they are “always already” the judgment of another judgment. In a similar way, Strozier assumes that Foucault's answer to the question of the genesis of a particular discourse merely would be “other discourses”: “the problematic relation of discourse and origin – and here not *Ursprung* but *Entstehung*, or what was available for convergence at any given time – has simply been displaced to the question of the origin of the prior discourse”.<sup>280</sup> Contrary to Hegel, judgment is here not conceived of as an articulation of, and response to, an experience of being as that which enables the existence and historicity of the human being, and thus its judgment, but instead as the subject's construction of being. This subject is therefore caught between the assuredness of a lucid access to its subjectivity, and the recognition of this subjectivity as the inherited judgment of another. For Hegel however, the relation to the own subjectivity, as well as to the other's, is founded on a common relation to spirit, whereupon all historical relations and structures must be grasped as articulations of this latter relation. Accordingly, the historical structures constituting the self cannot be said to originate from subjects, not from their interactions, but exactly from the unfolding dialectic of spirit, in which subjects co-exist.

## **6. Concluding commentary: the sway of the subject**

Butler provides us with an insight into a critical predicament of modernity, according to which the condition for identity is a perpetual, non-reconcilable diremption. Yet Butler herself, it must be said, does not regard her position from this perspective. With her account of the ek-stasis of the subject, she considers herself to shatter the firm distinction between subject and object through displacing the dichotomy altogether. But according to my reading, this dichotomy is hereby reversed rather than sublated, as the subject rather has become the *object*

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<sup>280</sup> Strozier (2002), p. 95.

of discourse. The distinction is not erased, but *intensified*, by means of a tensed sway between subject position and object position. History assumes the position of subject, subjecting the individual subject, and thus making it into an object. But in being a subject, a ὑποκείμενον, the human being simultaneously seems to be the foundation of this negative dialectic, a possibility that was unfolded in my reading of *PLP* and the reciprocity of power and subjectivity. It became clear that depending on the perspective, the subject could also be viewed as the source of power, and not merely its outcome. Against the background of this, identity becomes a question of the self-determination of consciousness, *and* of the immediate diminishment of its self-assertion and self-knowledge. The own subject is the reference point for the strive of identity – but in finding itself, it is claimed by otherness. The categories of identity are found in structures which define and determine this subject, and yet defies it.

The answer to the question of how this subject position can experience itself as deprived of subjectivity in the substantial sense, can, I argue, be finally unfolded in the encounter with Heidegger's thinking. Butler's reconfiguration of Hegel is undertaken on the basis of a reading of Hegel himself, but my argument is that neither Butler, nor Hegel can provide us with an ultimate answer to the question of the root of the contemporary problem of identity. What has been demonstrated through Butler in this chapter, is that the Hegelian concept of identity cannot maintain itself, but leads to a disintegration of identity, the resolution of which seems inaccessible. But why is this turn inevitable? If the problem is neither of eternal-ontological, nor pure politico-historical origin, from where does it stem, and could identity be thought beyond it?

## Chapter Four. Identity as authenticity: Heidegger's *Being and Time*

### 1. Finding the question of identity in Heidegger: from *Being and Time* to "The Principle of Identity"

*IuD* contains the only texts by Heidegger hitherto that are explicitly and extensively dedicated to identity and difference as a theme on its own, beyond logic, in terms of the coming together of the human being and being as an event of an ontological differing *and* a belonging. But the question of identity in terms of being oneself as a human being, motivated his first major work as well. *Authenticity* is the theme through which the query of finding oneself, of making one's own being manifest, and thus obtaining a consistent "self", is explored in *SZ*.

At the same time, this notion of being oneself, as being authentic Dasein, is also what would motivate Heidegger's turn, leading up to *IuD*: the focus on Dasein and its authenticity would, according to Heidegger himself, ultimately obscure the question of being, which in *SZ* is discovered in terms of something which Dasein "cares for". What is not yet developed as a question in the early work, is being's reign over the human, and the conflict between this reign and the self-identification of the human being. Thus, to be oneself in *IuD* is no longer a matter of greater self-government, but of giving oneself over to that which completely transforms our understanding of what it means to be human, of selfhood and of identity, radically de-centering ourselves as human beings.

Nevertheless, the present chapter, beginning with a short survey of *IuD*, will continue with an analysis of the theme of identity, authenticity and selfhood in *SZ*. The purpose is threefold: first, it is intended as an investigation of Heidegger's motivation to pose the question of selfhood and I-ness in relation to the question of being, a motivation which still underlies the later works, albeit in a transformed respect. Second, it serves as a background for the subsequent chapters, which aim at understanding Heidegger's turn in terms of a new orientation in the theme of identity and selfhood. The third reason is that *SZ* is a work through which Butler and Heidegger in at least one respect seem to converge in their views on identity and historicity. Like Butler, Heidegger is here preoccupied with the project of framing the point or the moment where the non-chosen facticity of historicity can be redeemed and appropriated as self-constituting, guiding a new projection towards the future – a future where one's own temporality is actively involved, itself creating and deciding upon history. Both Butler and Heidegger recognize the inevitable intertwining of the own historicity and the other's, as the human from the beginning is defined as a socially open being, existentially seen, and there-

fore as given over to its heritage and its social framework. In fact, it is Heidegger and his *SZ*, among other works, that indirectly inspired Butler's deconstruction of the isolated Cartesian subject.

Yet equally important is to interrogate in what way, and why, they will diverge in their views on these matters. The main difference between them, I argue, is to be found in Heidegger's attentiveness to being as something other than beings, grounding his clear distinction between authenticity and inauthenticity, as well as the concept of the moment of vision. The latter is the temporal occurrence which allows Dasein to become free for its historicity, able to redeem the past towards the future. The lack of anything equivalent to the differentiation between beings and being in Butler, exposes a philosophical divergence between them that will have consequences for their views on identity. In unfolding this divergence, I will not only take the first step towards a Heideggerian examination and critique of the problem of identity in Butler's theories, but also begin to elucidate the motivations for the shift in perspective of later Heidegger.

It is in the wake of German idealism in general and Hegel in particular, that Heidegger in "The Principle of Identity" opens up a meditation on the law of identity in the form of  $A=A$ . Similar to Hegel, Heidegger recognizes the necessity of mediation for something to be itself, or in order to be what it is. Something must be drawn to itself, be *with* itself, in order to be something, and to be thought and articulated as something.<sup>281</sup> It follows therefore that the conciliation inherent in this statement must be comprehended as a statement about being. At the same time, this is something which this law presupposes, rather than demonstrates:

For the proposition really says: "A is A." What do we hear? With this "is," the principle tells us how every being is, namely: it itself is the same with itself. The principle of identity speaks of the being of beings. As a law of thought, the principle is valid only insofar as it is a principle of being that reads: To every being as such there belongs identity, the unity with itself.<sup>282</sup>

For this reason, "The claim of identity speaks from the being of beings."<sup>283</sup> Unknowingly, the law raises the profound question of what it means to bear the weight of being at all, to be dis-

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<sup>281</sup> *IuD*, pp. 33-34.

<sup>282</sup> "Eigentlich lautet sie: *A ist A*. Was hören wir? In diesem 'ist' sagt der Satz, wie jegliches Seiende ist, nämlich: Es selber mit ihm selbst dasselbe. Der Satz der Identität spricht vom Sein des Seienden. Als ein Gesetz des Denkens gilt der Satz nur, insofern er ein Gesetz des Seins ist, das lautet: Zu jedem Seienden als solchem gehört die Identität, die Einheit mit ihm selbst.", *Ibid.*, p. 35. I will follow J. Stambaugh's translation from 1969, henceforth referred to as *ID*. Here, p. 26.

tinguishable as something in being, and thereby to be for thought. The question evoked by this proposition, if we follow Heidegger, would thus be: what is it to be one with oneself in the sense of being gathered with oneself into one being? With this reformulation of the question of identity, it becomes clear that being would remain Heidegger's main question within this topic as well.

But the essay equally contains an important reconsideration of the question of the meaning of being, following the path of the turn inaugurated by *Beiträge*. Identity, Heidegger continues, has throughout the metaphysical tradition been comprehended as one of the central characteristics of being.<sup>284</sup> Within the various conceptualizations created by metaphysics, being has been understood in terms of substantiality, as stasis, or as eternal presence. On the basis of this conceptualization, being has become equal to objectivity, and therefore primarily interrogated in terms of a "what". Knowledge in the form of science has completed this conceptualization, exclusively finding being in and as the various regions of beings.

Heidegger's thinking, in opposition to this, from the very beginning strives for an understanding of being as that which cannot be grasped as a being in any respect, as it is that which lets beings be *as* beings. Being is that which makes beings manifest, but this cannot be represented in terms of substantiality, exactly as such an understanding would grasp the nature of being in terms of ontical characteristics. For Heidegger, the fact that being nevertheless is revealed through beings, indicates that it can only be questioned in its enigmatic *differing* from these.

The being for which being becomes questionable, something that is for thought, is for Heidegger the human being, an insight that also constitutes the basis of *SZ*. Further, it is not merely one's own being, but the being of beings as a whole, that gives itself in human experience, and in thought. In other words, it is only for the human mind that being can be given in its difference from beings. At the same time, it is the human, standing in the "twofold" (*Zweifalt*) of being and beings, that can be caught in a forgetfulness of the ontological difference.<sup>285</sup>

As Heidegger throughout his works relocated the topos and the character of being in this respect, another topic was actualized, gradually leading him into the confrontation with subject metaphysics. The question arising with his novel account of being, was namely how, exactly, being's relation to the human mind and existence was to be understood. If being was manifest in a certain mode of existence of the human being, then what is the nature of this

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<sup>283</sup> "Der Anspruch der Identität spricht aus dem Sein des Seienden.", *Ibid.*, p. 36. [p. 27].

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>285</sup> *GA 7*, p. 245.

mode? What is the character of this human being to begin with, and why is it marked by an openness towards being that allows it to care for it? According to Heidegger, subject metaphysics, finding its completion in Hegel's and Nietzsche's thinking, constituted important, and yet problematic ways of responding to the challenge that this inversion of the gaze of classical metaphysics presented to thinking. Heidegger's philosophy, on its part, would according to the thinker himself be a continuous attempt to capture the mode or aspect of the human being that lets it be explicitly involved with being in a more careful manner, without thereby announcing the human as the ground of being.

The set of problems behind this approach to being, struggling to find a way beyond both object- and subject-metaphysics, will also mark the problem of identity for Heidegger. For it is as an effort to an approach of this kind, that Heidegger in *IuD* suggests that being now must be grasped within the figure of what he names a belonging-together of being and man.<sup>286</sup> It is this new vision that Heidegger attempts to emphasize as the core of Parmenides saying that thinking and being coincide: "For the same perceiving (thinking) as well as being."<sup>287</sup> An explication of Heidegger's interpretation of Parmenides will follow in chapter 5.4. For now it is enough to mention that the sense of the latter's saying, on Heidegger's reading, is the declaration that being only is to be grasped as one aspect of the phenomenon of identity. This means that being only is what it "is" in the event of the belonging-together of the thinking human being, and being; of something which could be called their identity, although Heidegger only reluctantly remains by that word. It would perhaps be more accurate to say that with the event of belonging-together, it is the essence of identity that is at issue. To understand identity, and finally to endorse it, is for Heidegger somehow a task on the part of the human being to establish an explicit relationship to something with which it is already familiar in terms of its existence. With this conception of identity, the human being is a pivotal part of something which must not be theorized in a too hasty manner.

This involvement of the human is equally that which puts its "own" identity at issue. Following Heidegger, I will show, no questions of human identity can be considered apart from the fact that the human being is a site of the manifestation of being. As has already been demonstrated in the transition to the present chapter, all philosophical interrogations of the one or the other form of identity that an individual can embody point towards this more fundamental, ontological query. Regardless of the specific conception of identity with which we

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<sup>286</sup> *IuD*, p. 37. [*ID*, p. 28].

<sup>287</sup> "τό γάρ αὐτό νοεῖν ἐστὶν τε καὶ εἶναι.", *Ibid.*, p. 36. [p. 27].

begin, we will face the question of being, and ourselves in our relation to it. Identity, the human being, and being are accordingly interconnected, however all subordinate to the belonging-together as an event. Heidegger writes: "What does the event have to do with identity? Answer: Nothing. Identity, on the other hand, has much, perhaps everything, to do with the event."<sup>288</sup>

But what is the nature of this relationship of belonging-together? Why is it according to Heidegger something that occidental philosophy, including Hegel, ultimately has left "unthought"? The answer is for Heidegger to be found in the nature of the relation itself, a nature that must be unfolded together with a confrontation with metaphysics. With its own specific inquiry into being, metaphysics has *indirectly* posed the question of this reciprocity between being and beings. It is this implicitness that constitutes the problem for Heidegger, indicating the fact that the difference never was interrogated as an independent question. The relation and difference between being and beings is therefore both what grounds metaphysics, and that which the latter has avoided to think properly.

How is this grip on identity linked to the theme of selfhood in *SZ*? An initiating delineation of identity in the latter work could be made through the topic of authenticity. The presumption behind the concept of authenticity, meaning the occurrence and phenomenon through which the possibility of being oneself as a human is enacted, is one of the targets of later Heidegger's self-criticism, due to the ambition to unfold a more original relationship to being. But in so far as authenticity is a matter of letting being emerge as an ek-static wholeness, as the unity of care and of temporality, rather than of finding a "self" in an anthropological or social respect, the concept also serves as a preparation for the later works, which explore being on "its own terms". What remains beyond the borders of the concept of authenticity, is the question of how authenticity can occur historically, and from where its impetus arrives, precisely as these questions demand a view of being as something more than human existentiality. To repeat, it is also the more developed thought of being that will mark the difference between Butler and Heidegger. But already in *SZ*, where some similarities between them will be displayed, it is the regard to being that will decide upon the crucial difference between two seemingly alike accounts of authentic selfhood.

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<sup>288</sup> "Was hat das *Ereignis* mit der Identität zu tun? Antwort: Nichts. Dagegen hat die Identität vieles, wenn nicht alles mit dem *Ereignis* zu tun.", *Ibid.*, p. 47. [p. 38]. Translation modified: Stambaugh uses the word "appropriation" for *Ereignis*, not event.

## 2. Identity and selfhood in *Being and Time*

Where to begin with the exploration of Dasein's perception of itself in *SZ*? The most appropriate answer would be: with the perception of oneself *as* a self. Mansbach writes: "Dasein is not an entity that merely *is*, but rather one whose existence is by nature directed at being an individual, a self. For Dasein, to exist means to make itself a self."<sup>289</sup> Because Dasein is nothing "present-at-hand" (*vorhanden*), its identity is not a matter of determination in the sense of an attribution of characteristics to a thing, but a question of self-interpretation and self-articulation. Dasein will therefore interpret its being in terms of *who*, and not *what* it is as this self.<sup>290</sup> Heidegger writes that "Dasein is an entity which is in each case I myself; its being is in each case mine."<sup>291</sup> And so "Because Dasein has in each case mineness [*Jemeinigkeit*], one must always use a personal pronoun when one addresses it: 'I am', 'you are'." (Brackets in original.)<sup>292</sup> But the question of mineness is twofold. It can be understood as the question about which specific ontic characterization or belonging that constitutes the being of *this* self, as well as the interrogation into that which constitutes *the self as such*, that is, the question about what it means to be as a self at all. In *SZ*, these aspects will converge.

The foundation of the whole argument of *SZ* is Heidegger's explication of the fact that being for the human being means "being-in-the-world" (*In-der-Welt-sein*). Identity cannot be a phenomenon found outside of the world. But how do we find ourselves in this world? How does being-in-the-world determine our self-reflection or self-understanding?

An articulation of the own being is based on a self-understanding which encompasses an understanding of the world, as something in which one is involved in the sense that it determines one's being. Due to the condition that Dasein is being-in-the-world, we again find a demonstration of a tension inherent in all self-interpretation and self-determination. Dasein's identity is constituted on the basis of an existence that comprises a "concern" (*Besorgen*) with other entities of both human and non-human nature – but identity is equally a question of Dasein's relation to its own being, which for Heidegger is "care" (*Sorge*) itself.<sup>293</sup> What we unfold explicitly here is what is implicitly suggested as soon as one asserts the own identity: the fact that one "is" something, conveys a belonging to something through a belonging to being.

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<sup>289</sup> Mansbach (2002), p. 40.

<sup>290</sup> *SZ*, ¶ 9. I will use the English translation by J. Macquarrie and E. Robinson (1962), but all references follow the original pagination of the Niemeyer edition.

<sup>291</sup> "Dasein ist Seiendes, das je ich selbst bin, das Sein ist je meines.", *Ibid.*, ¶ 25, p. 114.

<sup>292</sup> "Das Ansprechen von Dasein muß gemäß dem Charakter der Jemeinigkeit dieses Seienden stets das Personalpronomen mitsagen: 'ich bin', 'du bist' ", *Ibid.*, ¶ 9, p. 42.

<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 12, pp. 57-58.

For Heidegger, the question of the meaning of being that guides *SZ* is therefore directly intertwined with the question of how Dasein is manifested to itself as a being in the world, of how it is disclosed to itself in its worldly existence. For this reason, the starting point is the preconception that Dasein has of its own being in its everyday mode of being, what he calls the “everydayness” (*Alltäglichkeit*). In our daily lives, we already move within a perception and understanding of being that is continuously expressed in all propositions about something *being* the one or the other thing, or in the one or the other way.<sup>294</sup>

The main difficulty motivating an analysis of this kind, is of course that Dasein lacks an immediate access to being. It is this condition that according to Heidegger's argument *obstructs* its relation to being, making it “inauthentic” (*uneigentlich*).<sup>295</sup> Dasein, because it is a being-in-the-world, first and foremost encounters *beings* in their being, rather than being. This predicament is thus the background against which the question of identity must be posed. Indeed, it is the background against which identity becomes questionable at all. It constitutes the predicament of the ontological difference, of the fact that everything in being is both a manifestation of being and *a* being, and that Dasein always encounters both simultaneously. Because of its everyday existence, in which it is for the most part concerned with beings only, it continuously fails to acknowledge this difference, whereupon this obfuscates the authentic relation to being.

One conclusion that must be drawn from this, is that Dasein's understanding of its identity should be viewed as primarily obstructed as well – however not in terms of the specific ontical determinations that constitute the content of an identity, but in its ontological foundations – in other words, in the existential structure which grounds the very prospect of understanding one's ontical presence in the world ontologically. It is, therefore, Dasein's “average” (*durchschnittlichen*) understanding of its own being, of the world and of itself as a being that first must be discussed if we are to unfold the question of identity in *SZ*.<sup>296</sup>

By contrast, an ontological difference of this mentioned kind is not accounted for by Butler. This will have an impact on the respective ways in which Heidegger and Butler regard an identity that unfolds the “own”, and an identity that conceals it.

As the existential location of Dasein also implies an inherited hermeneutical situation, an examination of Dasein in terms of its relation to being must, according to Heidegger, simultaneously deal with and destruct the inherited metaphysical assumptions about being as well as

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<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 1, p. 4.

<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 9, pp. 42-43.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 2, p. 8

the human being. Hermeneutically-historically understood, the meaning of the analytic of Dasein is hence to pose the question of “the *meaning of the being of the ‘sum’*” in the Cartesian proposal “ergo sum”.<sup>297</sup> At the same time, Heidegger claims, we cannot find a conception of being on an already given subject or “I”-substance, on the *res cogitans*, as this is a conception which does not account for the specific mode of being of the human being.<sup>298</sup> Both that which we refer to as the human subject, as well as its being, must therefore be thought anew. Only then can it be shown how they obtain their respective ontological meaning in their interdependency.

What according to Heidegger further complicates this analytic and therefore must be destroyed together with the Cartesian conception given above, is the Greek-Christian anthropology, according to which the human is grasped as a ζῷον λόγον ἔχον / *animal rationale*. In this conception, the human being is understood as a thinking creature, grasped as something that is present in the same way as an animal or an object. Equally problematic is the conception of the human being as the creation of God. Taken together, these anthropological roots of philosophy are for Heidegger the reason why the ontology of the human being has been taken for granted in metaphysics. What has been left out of consideration in the conceptions above is an account of how the human being first and foremost is a being that is preoccupied with being.<sup>299</sup> The notion of “Dasein” is therefore meant to be a counter-conception to these inherited understandings.<sup>300</sup> This concept, however, only exhibits its radical potential if the most important part of the argument of *SZ* is closely followed: the structures which it shelters must be unfolded not through a theoretical meditation, but through an existentiell leap into its very core.

### 3. Between understanding and facticity

In developing the theme of identity in *SZ*, we must now continue by examining how understanding, according to Heidegger, merely is one of the forms of “disclosedness” (*Erschlossenheit*) that constitute the different “existentials” (*Existenzialen*) of Dasein. The assertions through which Dasein fulfils and understands itself, and which, in turn, are told to be derived from “discourse” (*Rede*), are not to be understood as primarily “rational” or as “objective knowledge”, and even less so when they are turned into a self-articulation. The

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<sup>297</sup> “*Seinssinn des ‘sum’*”, *Ibid.*, ¶ 6, p. 24.

<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>300</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 4.

own existence and the world in which it takes place, Heidegger holds, is given to us in such a respect that it gives us resistance, as something which has already subjected us, and thus “at-tuned” (*stimmen, gestimmt*) us. Existence must have the character of being “already given”, involving a context which from the beginning engages us in multiple ways. It is this specific character of “being-in” that according to Heidegger constitutes Dasein as *facticity* (*Faktizität*), as the factualness of the kind of presence which belongs to the human being specifically. In the following passage, Heidegger defines more closely what is meant by this:

Dasein's facticity is such that its being-in-the-world has always dispersed [zerstreut] itself or even split itself up into definite ways of being-in. The multiplicity of these is indicated by the following examples: having to do with something, producing something, attending to something and looking after it, making use of something, giving something up and letting it go, undertaking, accomplishing, evincing, interrogating, considering, discussing, determining ....<sup>301</sup> (Brackets in original.)

It is as factually existing, Heidegger continues, that Dasein can understand itself as having a “destiny”, here referring to a determined involvement with other Dasein’s and their respective life-contexts.<sup>302</sup> This brief statement about destiny, however, receives its full explanation in paragraphs 74 and 75, on the “historicality” (*Geschichtlichkeit*) and historicity (*Historizität*) of Dasein. For now, we must remain by the a-temporal characterizations of facticity.

What Heidegger tries to demonstrate, is that being in time and space is possible for Dasein only as a concretely given being-in-the-world. As existing, it is always located in a spatiotemporal location which it has not chosen, but in which it has already been ascribed a role, a definition – an identity in the most immediate sense of the word. In this respect, its being is determined by “thrownness” (*Geworfenheit*).<sup>303</sup> This, in turn, is what grounds the “state-of-mind” (*Befindlichkeit*) of Dasein, disclosing itself ontically as moods (*Stimmungen*).<sup>304</sup> This argument makes it clear that identification always must be grounded in an affective relation to the world, as much as a thinking or understanding one. One is never “neutrally” in the world, as if possible to determine oneself as a neutral entity within an objective structure, but one is also always determined by emotional attachments to it. In a similar way, Butler had defined

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<sup>301</sup> ”Das In-der-Welt-sein des Daseins hat sich mit dessen Faktizität je schon in bestimmte Weisen des In-Seins zerstreut oder gar zersplittert. Die Mannigfaltigkeit solcher Weisen des In-Seins läßt sich exemplarisch durch folgende Aufzählung anzeigen: zutunhaben mit etwas, herstellen von etwas, bestellen und pflegen von etwas, verwenden von etwas, aufgeben und in Verlust geraten lassen von etwas, unternehmen, durchsetzen, erkunden, befragen, betrachten, besprechen, bestimmen...”, *Ibid.*, ¶ 12, pp. 56-57.

<sup>302</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>303</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 29, p. 135.

<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 134.

the subject as “always already” constituted by the world in which it finds itself, through norms, habits and identity categories. There is no subject before this determinateness.

Expressed as the facticity of Dasein in Heidegger, this fact of already being formed is also in his view as fundamental as the understanding when it comes to the articulation of identity. Dasein is existent in the respect that its existentiality allows it to reflect on itself, to comport itself towards its existence in a free manner, and thus to make assertions about what it is that determines this existence in terms of ends and forthcoming projects – a freedom which for Butler, too, is a central characteristic of selfhood and identity. But as it is factual, so Heidegger asserts, its claims about itself are not unbounded; the freedom that they manifest is grounded in finite, affectively determined conditions. A self-understanding is thus an understanding of the various possibilities that this facticity enables in one’s existence.<sup>305</sup> Dasein is determined as much as it is still “outstanding” (*ausstehend*).<sup>306</sup> Understanding as an understanding of possibilities is Dasein’s way of standing out; what Heidegger refers to as potentiality-for-being (*Seinkönnen*) and being-possible (*Möglichsein*).<sup>307</sup> It is in these existentials that Dasein deals with the open character of its existence, the fact that it “is” in such a way that this “is” never is definite, that its being displays itself in a space of potentiality. Being-possible describes existence as “not yet” actual (“das *noch nicht Wirkliche*”),<sup>308</sup> Dasein’s being as outstanding openness. Therefore, Heidegger states that “possibility as an *existentiale* is the most primordial and ultimate positive way in which Dasein is characterized ontologically”.<sup>309</sup> It is because of its understanding that Dasein has the power to *project* itself in different directions, and thus actively counter and transform the aspects of its identity that are given by way of its thrownness.<sup>310</sup>

In the same paragraph, Heidegger summarizes the relation between facticity and possibility with the statement that Dasein experiences itself to be “ ‘more’ than it factually is”, but that this experience must be viewed as an illusion, as its facticity from the outset includes its potentiality-for-being. Thrownness and projection are intertwined. Our possibilities arise from our facticity, but our facticity receives its signification through projection. The meaning of our facticity is, in this sense, always deferred. It is because of this reciprocity, Heidegger concludes, that the encouragement to “Become what you are” (“werde, was du bist”) is possi-

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<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶, 31, p. 143.

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶, 45, pp. 233-236.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶, 31, p. 143.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>309</sup> “Die Möglichkeit als Existentzial dagegen ist die ursprünglichste und letzte positive ontologische Bestimmtheit des Daseins”, *Ibid.*, pp. 143-144.

<sup>310</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 145.

ble.<sup>311</sup> In order to form an identity in the sense of a self-defined belonging to something, Dasein must be a being that is both closed and open in relation to itself. As if resonating this account, Butler likewise admits and accounts for these two “ends” of identity. However, the fact that she only occasionally considers this structure as ontological, and without contemplating the implications of such a thought, will also have consequences for the question of how to account for the occurrence or transformative moment in which these ends not only oppose, but *redeem* one another.

Looking closer at the existential of being-possible in *SZ*, the meaning of this term is to emphasize that possibilities are not to be grasped as extracted from the world in the respect that it would be our articulation of these possibilities that first creates the freedom intrinsic to them. It is not our open comportment towards our existence that *creates* this openness. Rather, it is because existence has an open-ended character, on which Dasein can project something, that Dasein can limit itself to the one or the other possibility. This given, we can discern a constituting “lack of totality” (*Unganzheit*) in existence here. The temporal character of Dasein is responsible for the fact that its existence is outstanding, that its wholeness is always deferred, projected onto a future.<sup>312</sup> In projecting a possibility, we direct ourselves towards the project of fulfilling our existence. But the one or the other possibility can never fulfil or settle the very dimension of being that being-possible itself is. One possibility always leaves another one out.<sup>313</sup> Our projections can never accomplish a final fulfilment of the open-endedness of existence as such, although it is this urge that enables the projection. Neither can our projections liberate us from our total facticity, in the sense that facticity could altogether lose its intrinsic character of foreignness and pastness. Our concerns can never fulfil existentiality and extricate facticity as such. Being first and foremost a factual existence concerned with its world, we are ultimately unable to “become who we are”. Identity in the usual sense of the word, as selfhood derived from the preoccupations with a world, does not coincide with the full being of the human. At this point, the difference between Heidegger and Butler starts to appear. For Heidegger, this “lack of totality” is merely the condition of one of the modes of existence, namely the inauthentic, immediate one. The deferred totality is a dimension which can be accessed on wholly other terms, namely in so far as Dasein considers itself as a non-dispersed being. What is that which lies “between” our concerns, which allows us to discern them in the first place, and to discern ourselves as somewhat *more* than them? We do not fully

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<sup>311</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 48, p. 242.

<sup>313</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 58, p. 285.

coincide with any one of our determinations, concerns or plans, as we then would be unaware of them to begin with. It is this space in between them, between us and that which we project or find ourselves determined by, that, as we shall see, brings us before our being beyond its dispersal, being as care itself, rather than concerns.

The impossibility of becoming who we are is an aporia located in the mode of everydayness itself. With this insight as a starting point, we must now more closely define the condition for this mode of disclosure. The critical feature of it is that it follows from an absorption in the world, entailing that it misses the very *phenomenon* of world. Dasein's self-understanding is therefore made out by that which is present-at-hand and ready-to-hand in this same world. It is dispersed in that which is not itself, finding itself in and through it, in its dealings and modifications of it.<sup>314</sup> With another formulation, Dasein is "fascinated" (*benommen*) by the things surrounding it.<sup>315</sup> The significance of this is now to be brought out.

#### **4. Falling, "the they", and selfhood**

Everydayness is according to Heidegger grounded in a fourth aspect of disclosedness, namely "falling" (*Verfallen*).<sup>316</sup> The term designates the fact that Dasein understands the world through its immediate concern with it.

The sense of this will first be briefly explicated through Heidegger's critique of the inherited philosophical understandings of the self in a series of lectures given at Marburg university in 1927, collected as *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* in the *GA*. Here, Heidegger again confronts the metaphysical conception of the human being, in the form of the Husserlian-phenomenological as well as Kantian and Cartesian comprehension of the I. If intentionality is "self-direction-toward" (*Sichrichten-auf*), as for Husserl, then this must denote an I that is directed towards the world. But is this I, to some degree, to be understood as a center? According to Heidegger, we cannot use the formal definition of intentionality to deduct an I in the form of an agent of the act of intentionality. The problem, he argues, is that the question of the mode of being (*Seinsart*) of this center thereby would remain unsolved. Rather, he suggests, we must ask in which way the I is given to the kind of existence inhabited by the human being.<sup>317</sup> Formally, the Kantian conception of the I as a consciousness of something that is at the same time conscious of itself, an "I think" leading and carrying all its representations in

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<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 14, p. 65.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 13, p. 61.

<sup>316</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 38.

<sup>317</sup> *Die Grundprobleme der Phänomenologie*, *GA* 24, pp. 224-225. English transl. by A. Hofstadter (1988), p. 158.

the act of reflection, would be accurate, as well as the conception of “res cogitans” as “cogito me cogitare”. But these notions miss the “phenomenal circumstances of the Dasein”,<sup>318</sup> the problem of *how* this being factually appears to itself, before the conceptions of an I and a subject. All affairs and relations to the world, Heidegger holds, involve the “*the associated unveiling of the self*”.<sup>319</sup> It is therefore not the case that the self first directs itself towards things, and then towards itself as that which has enacted this act, but the self is given to Dasein prior to any reflection.<sup>320</sup>

However, Heidegger continues, reflection could be understood as a characteristic of Dasein if it is reformulated in terms of a reflection of Dasein in the things with which it is preoccupied, as “each one of us is what he pursues and cares for”.<sup>321</sup> For this reason

The Dasein does not need a special kind of observation, nor does it need to conduct a sort of espionage on the ego in order to have the self; rather, as the Dasein gives itself over immediately and passionately to the world itself, its own self is reflected to it from things.<sup>322</sup>

Thus, it is on the basis of this concern that everyday Dasein finds itself “outside” of itself: “the self” is deduced from the preoccupations in which its being is invested.

Kant, Heidegger argues in paragraph 64 of *SZ*, had understood that the ontically experienced conception of the self as substance cannot ground an ontological conception of selfhood. At the same time, though, the I for Kant remains a logical subject, as that which synthesizes representations, and is thus permanently present-at-hand. Kant does not consider how “I think” always implies a world in and on which the I thinks.<sup>323</sup>

The argument behind Heidegger's critique of the Kantian conceptualization of the I is more complicated than is first obvious, but altogether fundamental in the context of identity. Dasein in its immediate understanding of itself, it has been argued, grasps itself on the basis of its being-in-the-world. This dispersal does not mean that Dasein lacks a sense of selfhood, but on the contrary, it is this fascination that constitutes its selfhood. Based on this fascination in question, it will perceive and present itself as an I, thus indeed experience itself *ontically* in

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<sup>318</sup> “phänomenalen Tatbestände des Daseins”, *Ibid.*, pp. 225-226. [pp. 158-159].

<sup>319</sup> “*das Mitenthülltsein des Selbst*”, *Ibid.*, p. 225. [p. 158].

<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 226.

<sup>321</sup> “Jeder ist das, was er betreibt und besorgt”, *Ibid.*, p. 226. [p. 159].

<sup>322</sup> “Es bedarf nicht einer eigenen Beobachtung und einer Spionage gegenüber dem Ich, um das Selbst zu haben, sondern in unmittelbarem leidenschaftlichen Ausgebensein an die Welt selbst erscheint das eigene Selbst des Daseins aus den Dingen wider.”, *Ibid.*, p. 227. [p. 159].

<sup>323</sup> *SZ*, ¶ 64, pp. 318-321.

terms of "simplicity" ("Simplizität"), "substantiality" ("Substantialität"), and "personality" ("Personalität"), as in the Kantian paralogisms of the pure reason.<sup>324</sup> Because this is the constitution of the inauthentic self, this understanding and experience of the I obscures authentic selfhood, both ontically and ontologically. For what is not yet known in the inauthentic mode of being, is the enigmatic task to understand the self on the basis of *itself*, as something which is neither to be grasped in terms of a subject present-at-hand, *nor* as that which is reflected back from the preoccupations in the world. This implies a different take on the Cartesian subject of substance in comparison to Butler. While for Butler this subject must be deconstructed as an ungrounded metaphysical conception, and challenged with an understanding of the subject that brings out its involvedness in the world, these two aspects are, for Heidegger, not opposites, but interrelated. The implications of this standpoint, which are further developed by later Heidegger, is that the metaphysics of subjectivity is broader and encompasses more layers than the simple belief in an intractable I-substance. Hence, the acknowledgement that we derive selfhood and self-recognition from a reflection of ourselves in the world, does not mean that we have come to terms with Cartesian metaphysics, but rather that we have dismantled its presuppositions. For Heidegger, the task is to find a *third* approach to selfhood and identity, which is neither founded on the dispersal in the world through concerns with beings, *nor* the sense of personal, consistent I-ness accompanying this dispersal. This approach is enacted when we turn the care and the attention that is invested in beings – including ourselves – towards care itself, that is, our being before its shattering into concerns.

Before exploring what is meant by this, we must explicate another decisive existential without which fallenness cannot be understood, and which, albeit formulated in other notions, is one of Butler's main subjects: being-with (*Mitsein*). In paragraph 26, Heidegger attempts to show how Dasein always is thrown projection together with other Daseins, and how being-in-the-world always is a matter of being with others. Not only does Dasein understand itself on the basis of entities in the world, and its affairs with them, but these structures and things with which one is concerned are in each case already coined by and shared with others, in such a fundamental respect that they also must be viewed as institutions of intersubjective relationships. Consequently, Dasein's understanding of that which is in being, and of the being that it itself is, inevitably involves an understanding of others. These others, in turn, are being understood according to the same structures that Dasein grasps itself through. The others are already a part of one's thrownness, as well as of one's possibilities, as limiting and enabling

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<sup>324</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 318.

both. To articulate who one is, means to articulate oneself in terms of concerns that directly or indirectly involve those others. A cultural context is however not only shared in the present, but also historically, meaning that others also have decided upon the past, how the past shall be taken up in the present, and what kind of future that should be expected. More about this in section 7 of this chapter.

Because of this temporal and spatial sharedness, everyday Dasein will continuously understand its affairs in the world, its life and its identity as something that develops in the context of a direct or indirect comparison with others and their disclosure of the world. Ends, possibilities, states-of-mind, as well as the interpretations of that which has been and what is to come, is disclosed in the light of the discourse of “the ‘they’ ” (*Das Mann*). “The they” arrange the everyday possibilities of Dasein, and thus the measure by way of which Dasein relates itself to its factual possibilities in understanding and in states-of-mind. As everyday being-with, one merely disposes of a “they”-self, a self that is constituted by a measure the origin of which is not one’s own.<sup>325</sup>

But the view of this measure as something that has its basis in “the they” in the sense of other Daseins, of course constitutes the paradox of this existential. For its pivotal aspect is the fact that because *everyone* is a Dasein, every Dasein itself is and upholds “the they”. The power that “the they” dispose of, is guaranteed by each Dasein. “The they” is therefore an expression that *covers* the fact that it is a constitutive of the existence of Dasein as in each case mine, and *not* of the factual, particular presence of others who I myself am not.<sup>326</sup> The other’s being-there as a co-constitution of the world is always a fact; but it is Dasein’s tendency to comport itself towards this fact as something that extinguishes its primary responsibility for its existence, its mineness, that generates the they-self.<sup>327</sup> For this reason, falling cannot be thought apart from this existential, as they together found Dasein’s inherent tendency to turn away from its own self.

Although Butler elaborates on the dynamics of intersubjectivity according to a similar logic, admitting the constitutive responsivity to others in each subject, we have also seen that the question of how to come to terms with this responsivity remains open for her. That is, implying that power is located in this responsivity, it is never interrogated if this insight can be taken on to the degree that the predicament of power is altered. For Heidegger, while we can

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<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 27, pp. 126-127.

<sup>326</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>327</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 128-129.

never extinguish our they-self in any final respect, it is *not the only* measurement of sociality and being-with, nor of the self.

It is here worth repeating the argumentation of paragraph 64 above, which indicated that the opposition to this lack of authentic selfhood would not be a greater independency of self-determination, in the sense of choices unaffected by others, established by the autonomy of something like a "true inner self". For although acting according to the "they", the everyday self *does already* comprehend itself as an independent, substantial self *as well*, as something with an ontical kernel of "I"-ness. Dasein always experiences a degree of autonomous self-positing within the framework of its non-mineness. Identity in the everyday mode of being is therefore in constant oscillation between the experience of passivity and activity, self-legislation and subjection. "The they" is no mere passive existential, but equally a mode established by active projection and articulation. By way of its continuous impetus to create and discover itself in a defined manner, Dasein is also a "they"-self.

The question must now be more explicitly posed: what makes Dasein's everyday self-articulation inauthentic? In the mode of everydayness, it is the falling in concern that mediates the presence of Dasein. But the condition for a self-expression of this kind, is that the ground of existence and selfhood remains inaccessible to Dasein – the *care itself* as an existential wholeness that first enables worldly concern. By using its existence for projection of factual possibilities, Dasein constantly *distorts* its being-possible, and with this its "ownmost" potentiality-for-being on the basis of which projections are possible in the first place.<sup>328</sup> Its self-reflection, based on different states-of-mind and projections, will therefore exclude authentic self-knowledge.

But what does Heidegger mean by this authentic mode of being? The answer is opened up by a range of interrelated concepts, such as potentiality-for-being-a-whole (*Ganzseinkönnen*), being-towards-death (*Sein zum Tode*), conscience (*Gewissen*), being-guilty (*Schuldigsein*) and resoluteness (*Entschlossenheit*). It is in this context that the possibility of authentic selfhood is presented and developed in terms of an openness to being.

A way to outline Heidegger's errand here, is through recalling Hölderlin's fragment. Hölderlin's basis for understanding the essence of what we call identity, was the account of how consciousness asserts itself in order to accomplish itself as identity, and of how this effort obscures the access to being that is implicitly intended by it. Heidegger's account of everydayness and inauthenticity can, I argue, be grasped along a similar line of argument. Dasein

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<sup>328</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 53, pp. 261-262.

lacks an immediate access to its own self, to the basis of its existence, because every possibility that it projects to add up to existence will bring forth a simultaneous emptiness or lack. Heidegger interprets self-positing as a natural impulse on the part of the self, through which we determine ourselves, but in which we nevertheless shut off the wholeness of being which we *attempt* to enact in this very same activity. A “nullity” (*Nichtigkeit*) surrounds and follows every new projection and assertion made by Dasein as a use of its everyday freedom.<sup>329</sup> Therefore, projection itself is “null”.<sup>330</sup>

To understand what is meant by this, we must not comprehend this nullity as something negative. Heidegger uses the expression as a concept that is meant to unveil the fact that Dasein ultimately cannot ground or create itself through its projections.<sup>331</sup> The uttermost framework of all projection is namely one’s possibility of death, the certainty of finitude. As Heidegger’s understanding of death here is merely existential, it is interrogated only in terms of a phenomenon in life.<sup>332</sup> The primary purpose of Heidegger’s depiction of Dasein as being-towards-death (*Sein zum Tode*) is to destruct the inherited metaphysical understanding of finitude as a sign of an incompleteness of existence, and instead demonstrate how it constitutes the crucial, positive condition for all being. Death is not an unfortunate ending of a life span which could as well be represented as ontologically or ontically infinite. It is a completion not only demonstrating that being is temporal, but that its open-endedness only is possible *because* it is limited. In other words, the whole existentiality of Dasein, that is, the free space in which it “encounters” possibilities, is governed by the determinateness and closure of death.<sup>333</sup>

It is a qualified comprehension of the ontological and existentiell implications of this mortality that everyday existence is incapable of. Its comportment towards existence is the comportment of infinitude, grasping the possibilities that a factual life opens up as enactments within an infinite timespace. Obviously, this does not mean that it understands these possibilities to be quantitatively infinite, but rather that they are approached as if they were enabled by the presence of the present, by the temporal dimension of the present. Dasein understands them as created by its act of articulation and usage of them, an act enacted by the respective present moment. Dasein cannot perceive that they in fact arise from its own *existentiality*, meaning that they are primordially given as parts of the one, whole possibility of Dasein to

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<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 58, p. 283.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 285.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 284.

<sup>332</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 49, p. 246.

<sup>333</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 50, p. 250.

comport itself towards its death as an ownmost possibility of existence. In other words, it fails to grasp these possibilities on the basis of the finite being-possible as such, to acknowledge how this open space only can be illuminated against the background of death. The inauthentic understanding can only get hold of possibilities in terms of something to actualize and make available. But to actualize a possibility in the inauthentic mode of being, Heidegger argues, is to “annihilate” (*vernichten*) the potentiality of the possibility, and therefore to annihilate it as possibility.<sup>334</sup> With each actualization, we withdraw from the existential of being-possible that constitutes our existence, and thereby from our possibility of being whole.

In this respect, it is in the transition from the openness of being-possible to the actualization of the factual differentiation of it into various possibilities of concern in the world, that Dasein loses sight of what being-possible, or existentiality in itself, could entail. Thus, the inevitability of death only leaves its trace in the form of a shadow of negativity surrounding the possibilities chosen.

### **5. Being-towards-death, conscience, and authenticity**

The next question is naturally how one could approach the possibility of death authentically, how to properly encounter its negation. Heidegger writes:

On the other hand, if being-towards-death has to disclose understandingly the possibility which we have characterized, and if it is to disclose it *as a possibility*, then in such being-towards-death this possibility must not be weakened: it must be understood *as a possibility*, it must be cultivated *as a possibility*, and we must *put up with it as a possibility*, in the way we comport ourselves towards it.<sup>335</sup>

For Heidegger, this attitude, where possibilities are taken on in their mode of being-possible, constitutes the “anticipation” (*Vorlaufen*) of death, where death is incorporated as something that is in each case mine, and thus becomes deprived of its abstract and impersonal character. It reveals itself as that definite possibility delimiting all other possibilities that I first and foremost define as my “own”. But as death is that which cannot be factually accomplished in life with less than the physical death of Dasein, the incorporation of it should not be grasped as a matter of its actualization. It can only be integrated as a living possibility that in the end defines life itself.

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<sup>334</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 53, p. 261.

<sup>335</sup> ”Im Sein zum Tode dagegen, wenn anders es die charakterisierte Möglichkeit als *solche* verstehend zu erschließen hat, muß die Möglichkeit ungeschwächt *als Möglichkeit* verstanden, *als Möglichkeit* ausgebildet und im Verhalten zu ihr *als Möglichkeit ausgehalten* werden.”, *Ibid.*

And so Heidegger holds that “Death, as possibility, gives Dasein nothing to be 'actualized', nothing which Dasein, as actual, could itself *be*.”<sup>336</sup> This is an important comment, attempting to capture how the anticipation of death, in which we advance the joints of our own existence, *deprives* Dasein of identity in the usual respect.<sup>337</sup> It does not provide Dasein with the one or the other belonging to something within the world, with the one or the other preoccupation or relation. It denies it the kind of involvedness in the shared world that *disburdens* (*entlastet*) Dasein from its being,<sup>338</sup> instead enhancing the burden of the latter and throwing Dasein back on it. Hence, in order to gain access to itself, Dasein must first lose its world.

When Dasein projects itself on its “*ownmost* and uttermost potentiality-for-being” (“*des eigensten äußersten Seinkönnens*”), and learns to understand itself in terms of its being as such, that is, its very existence, it is for the first time granted an “*authentic existence*” (“*eigentlicher Existenz*”).<sup>339</sup> The word *Eigentlichkeit* here designates “own” as well as “proper”. In acknowledging the negativity of death, one can approach the potential of existentiality as such, *as* a potential rather than an actualization. For Heidegger, this corresponds to a true individuation of Dasein, in terms of an “existential 'solipsism'”,<sup>340</sup> a notion that should not to be confused with a return to worldless subjectivity. It is when death has been allowed to claim Dasein in its individuality that authenticity can occur. Or more precisely: when death claims Dasein *as* something individual, Dasein is first individualized in an authentic manner, as submitted to its plain “there”-ness.<sup>341</sup>

Heidegger ends the paragraph with the conclusion that this possibility to obtain a whole Dasein is an *ontological* prospect only, which remains an existentiell challenge. It is a prospect that only can be confirmed in its ontology in an existentiell modification of Dasein itself.<sup>342</sup>

Heidegger understands this modification in terms of a confirmation of, and response to, something which he names the “call of conscience” (*Ruf des Gewissens*), a very particular mode of the disclosedness of discourse. According to him, this call should be grasped as a demand on Dasein to recollect its innermost being. While Dasein is primarily guided by the

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<sup>336</sup> “Der Tod als Möglichkeit gibt dem Dasein nichts zu 'Verwirklichendes' und nichts, was es als Wirkliches selbst *sein* könnte.”, *Ibid.*, p. 262.

<sup>337</sup> “Anticipation discloses to existence that its uttermost possibility lies in giving itself up, and thus it shatters all one's tenaciousness to whatever existence one has reached.” (“Das Vorlaufen erschließt der Existenz als äußerste Möglichkeit die Selbstaufgabe und zerbricht so jede Versteifung auf die je erreichte Existenz.”), *Ibid.*, p. 264.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 27, p. 127.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 53, p. 263.

<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 40, p. 188.

<sup>341</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 53, p. 263.

<sup>342</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 266-267.

voice of the “they”, the call of conscience, in opposition to this, designates an existentiell possibility for Dasein to hear *itself*. As a mode of speech, the call articulates a factual understanding of oneself. Heidegger speaks of it as an impact that shakes Dasein to the core, exactly at the point where “the they” cannot offer it any relief. The call opens up Dasein’s readiness to take responsibility for its whole being. In other words, it recalls Dasein from inauthenticity, and pushes it into authenticity. This call ignores Dasein in its usual identity, that by means of which it is addressed as a self by others and by itself in the mode of “the they”.<sup>343</sup> In this way, it lets Dasein become aware of itself as something more and above, or before, its various worldly concerns. It makes it beware of the fact that its is-ness, its being, stretches beyond these preoccupations, that it cannot be taken possession of by means of these. When Heidegger thus argues that “nothing” is hereby being announced to Dasein, we must understand him right. The meaning of this call is that *Nothing* is being called as a phenomenon in its own right, and “as such an appeal, it summons the Self to its potentiality-for-being-its-Self, and thus calls Dasein forth to its possibilities.”<sup>344</sup> The call has *nothing in particular* to say, and must instead be heard and experienced as the thrust of the *thus* of existence, its inherent possibility to disclose itself explicitly as existence. Only in a resonance of the inevitable “Nothing”, approachable as the individual death that surrounds existence, can this *thus* be heard. To conscience belongs therefore a proper kind of hearing, in the form of an ability to hear oneself in a manner that cannot be derived from social conventions.<sup>345</sup>

Returning to paragraph 58, we can therefore add that it is the nullity of existence that the call announces, but as a positive constituent for this existence. This nullity is already “there” in the respect that it is not created by Dasein, nor can be overcome by it. Dasein’s task is to recognize the insurmountability of the nullity, and to relinquish its natural resistance towards this condition. Only in this kind of surrender can the nullity become something that concerns Dasein as an existential, and in such a manner that it is revealed as the ground of its selfhood. It is therefore when it can shoulder this nullity, that it can become an authentic self.

What Dasein hears in this call, is therefore *itself, as* a proper self. A strange paradox is thus revealed, as it turns out that it is in this occurrence of calling-hearing that the self is *first created*, that Dasein’s “they”-self is modified into an individuated self. The differentiation occurs as Dasein becomes a self in the first place. In other words, only the responsibility for the self

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<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 56, p. 273.

<sup>344</sup> “als dieser Anruf der Aufruf des Selbst zu seinem Selbstseinkönnen und damit ein Vorrufen des Daseins in seine Möglichkeiten”, *Ibid.*, p. 274.

<sup>345</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 55, p. 271.

can enact it ontologically – yet at the same time, it is as an anticipation of this responsibility that the self can call itself into this transformation.

What Heidegger presents here, is clearly a dimension of human selfhood that is not regarded by Butler. For her, that which calls the subject is in the end always derived from the sphere of intersubjectivity: the call of the other, transmitted through structures, identities and norms. But Heidegger demonstrates that the most basic and defining characteristic of Dasein and its self stands independent from human impact, including its own: its thus-being, the fact that it is, rather than not, but that this “not” nevertheless awaits it as death. This is the dimension in us which remains unaffected by our control, our concerns, sufferings, and subjections, and at the same time that which is most difficult for us to perceive.

Following Heidegger further, the full experience of conscience is said to open up Dasein to a knowledge of its being-guilty. Heidegger makes rigorous efforts to explain that no usual sense of the concept of guilt is meant by this. Usually, guilt is defined in terms of “lack” (*Mangel*), understood in terms of something present-at-hand – a mode in which Dasein does not exist.<sup>346</sup> “Nevertheless”, Heidegger continues, “in the idea of ‘Guilty!’ there lies the character of the ‘not’ ”. And “Hence we define the formally existential idea of the ‘Guilty!’ as ‘being-the-basis for a being which has been defined by a ‘not’ ‘ – that is to say, as ‘*Being-the-basis of a nullity*’.”<sup>347</sup> These words comprise the full implications of the fact that Dasein is thrown into an existence which it has not chosen. Here, Dasein becomes aware of how thrownness only can be opposed through a full subjection to it; it cannot be overcome by possibilities founded upon it, as they, in turn, cannot be other than null in relation to a wholeness framed by death. In other words, they cannot add anything to this wholeness, because they are derived from it. The only way that this thrownness can be owned by Dasein, is by way of a submission to its nullity, as a full *responsibility* for it.<sup>348</sup>

Therefore, Heidegger’s claim that ” ‘Guilty!’ ” (” ‘*schuldig*’ ”) in fact is a predicate for existence, as “a predicate for the ‘I am’ ”, is perhaps to be taken more literally than is first obvious.<sup>349</sup> This assertion comprises, I would argue, several important claims: that to *be* is to be guilty, that it is *I* who am in this respect merely through existing, and that the I as a phenome-

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<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 58, p. 282.

<sup>347</sup> ”Gleichwohl liegt in der Idee von ‘schuldig’ der Charakter des Nicht.”; ”Die formal existenziale Idee des ‘schuldig’ bestimmen wir daher also: Grundsein für ein durch ein Nicht bestimmtes Sein — das heißt *Grundsein einer Nichtigkeit*.”, *Ibid.*, p. 283.

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 284.

<sup>349</sup> ”Prädikat des ‘ich bin’ ”, *Ibid.*, p. 281.

non must be comprehended on the basis of being-guilty. Before and behind all defined identities, one is a nullity which calls for responsibility.

However, responsivity here does not simply mean the summoning to form one's existence in a generally accountable or conscious manner. Rather, it is first and foremost a question of *experiencing* the fact, as a facticity, that one does not reign over one's being; that one can never bring it about through projection, but nevertheless must bear it as a projecting being. It is a conversion in which this predicament in question brings about an ontological destruction of the worldly oriented self and its identity. To care for one's being is in other words to turn concern towards care itself, whereupon this latter phenomenon becomes discernible in its wholeness: "The Self, which as such has to lay the basis for itself, can *never* get that basis into its power; and yet, as existing, it must take over being-a-basis. To be its own thrown basis is that potentiality-for-being which is the issue for care." Heidegger continues: "Thus 'being-a-basis' means *never* to have power over one's ownmost being from the ground up. This '*not*' belongs to the existential meaning of 'thrownness' "<sup>350</sup> Dasein's being is manifested to it as an ultimately unfamiliar matter, impossible to master, yet constituting the ground for a being that can refer to itself as a self. This insight is given factually as an existentiell modification in which Dasein's being is first released as this constituting nullity. And so, in a most dense passage, Heidegger sums up how this inverts the whole ground of identity for Dasein:

[...] in being its *Self*, Dasein is, *as* a Self, the entity that has been thrown. It has been *released* from its basis, *not through* itself but *to* itself, so as to be *as this basis*. Dasein is not itself the basis of its being, inasmuch as this basis first arises from its own projection; rather, as being-its-Self, it is the *being* of its basis. This basis is never anything but the basis for an entity whose being has to take over being-a-basis.<sup>351</sup>

And in the context of this, we can render Heidegger's most explicit and important statement about identity in *SZ*: "But in that case there is ontologically a gap separating the selfsameness of the authentically existing Self from the identity of that 'I' which maintains itself throughout

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<sup>350</sup> "Das Selbst, das als solches den Grund seiner selbst zu legen hat, kann dessen *nie* mächtig werden und hat doch existierend das Grundsein zu übernehmen. Der eigene geworfene Grund zu sein, ist das Seinkönnen, darum es der Sorge geht."; "Grundsein besagt demnach, des eigensten Seins von Grund auf *nie* mächtig sein. Dieses *Nicht* gehört zum existenzialen Sinn der Geworfenheit. Grundseiend *ist* es selbst eine Nichtigkeit seiner selbst.", *Ibid.*, p. 284.

<sup>351</sup> "*Selbst* seiend ist das Dasein das geworfene Seiende *als* Selbst. *Nicht durch* es selbst, sondern *an* es selbst *entlassen* aus dem Grunde, um *als dieser* zu sein. Das Dasein ist nicht insofern selbst der Grund seines Seins, als dieser aus eigenem Entwurf erst entspringt, wohl aber ist es als Selbstsein das *Sein* des Grundes. Dieser ist immer nur Grund eines Seienden, dessen Sein das Grundsein zu übernehmen hat.", *Ibid.*, pp. 284-285.

its manifold Experiences.”<sup>352</sup> Therefore, he states, “*The constancy of the Self*, in the double sense of steadiness and steadfastness, is the *authentic* counter-possibility to the non-Self-constancy which is characteristic of irresolute falling.”<sup>353</sup> Authentic identity must be understood as a constitution of the self as such. But a self in this respect can only be constituted in the recognition and appropriation of one’s own being. It is care assembled as a wholeness, and not as a dispersed concern in the world, that is concerned with itself in the form of self-hood.<sup>354</sup>

For Butler, by contrast, the equivalence to authentic identity would be to find that specific possibility in the world, that specific *ontic* identity category that is most own to the subject, that can confirm it – rather than to discover the space which allows for this identification. The border between “own” and “foreign” hides no ontological differentiation for her; the difference is established as a matter of owning or not owning one’s projections and identifications. Yet those, in turn, are prefigured, written by the other. The circularity cannot be avoided, and hence the relation between “own” and “foreign” remains an insidious one. For Heidegger, on the contrary, authentic “self-constancy” is established exactly in the break with this circularity. It is discovered as an experience of the fact that neither Dasein itself, as a human, nor the Dasein of others, ultimately can be “the basis of one’s being”.

And yet, being thrown into being, implies that Dasein in one way or another must take responsibility for it; for that which it has not itself constituted. This means however, settling in the world with it, entailing that choices must be made, one path or possibility chosen over another one. Being exposed to the bareness of our being, we must again face its differentiation in terms of possibilities, albeit now with a different approach. How?

## **6. Resoluteness**

The comportment of openness towards one’s own being in terms of facticity and being-possible, viewed in terms of an anticipation of death and a response to the call of conscience, is according to Heidegger accomplished in the mode of resoluteness – a concept the purpose of which is to emphasize the character of activity in the existentiell modification spoken of here. The German word for resoluteness, *Entschlossenheit*, echoes the word *Erschlossenheit*,

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<sup>352</sup> “Die Selbigkeit des eigentlich existierenden Selbst ist aber dann ontologisch durch eine Kluft getrennt von der Identität des in der Erlebnismannigfaltigkeit sich durchhaltenden Ich.”, *Ibid.*, ¶ 27, p. 130.

<sup>353</sup> “*Die Ständigkeit des Selbst* im Doppelsinne der beständigen Standfestigkeit ist die *eigentliche* Gegenmöglichkeit zur Unselbst-ständigkeit des unentschlossenen Verfallens.”, *Ibid.*, ¶ 64, p. 322.

<sup>354</sup> Raffoul writes: “I am only ‘myself’ through being: Mineness is not the ontic individuality, the worldless self, or a self-consciousness that is closed upon its *cogitationes*, but is instead to be understood in the meaning of its being, as the meaning of being.”, Raffoul (2003), pp. 210-211.

meaning disclosure, and thus reveals an active as well as a passive dimension. Fittingly, Mansbach interprets resoluteness as "taking action to disclose".<sup>355</sup> Heidegger's definition of this term goes as follows: "This distinctive and authentic disclosedness, which is attested in Dasein itself by its conscience – *this reticent self-projection up on one's ownmost being-guilty, in which one is ready for anxiety* – we call 'resoluteness' ".<sup>356</sup> These words show how anticipatory resoluteness existentially is the same as self-constancy.<sup>357</sup> Dasein, in choosing to bear its own "Da", is according to the present terminology resolute.

With the concept of resoluteness, the limits and problems of Heidegger's project become discernible, and an aporia that resembles Butler's will appear. What is pivotal with the mode of resoluteness, is that only the decision itself can tell us which *specific* possibilities to decide for, in so far as this decision also takes place in the world.<sup>358</sup> Accordingly, authenticity does not entail a withdrawal from the world, but rather represents a different kind of disclosure of it, of its factual possibilities. From out of a gaze that has incorporated death, one's life and sociality is structured anew.

But how, more precisely, are one's possibilities given in this form of disclosure, and how are they chosen? And in what respect would identity entail a belonging to something in the world for resolute Dasein, as an attachment to the one or the other affair or thing within the world? It has been explained that the authentic Dasein must direct its projections back at the non-masterable finitude that comprises its being, to let them be shaped from the pressure of this nullity. What this means for Dasein's being-in-the-world, positively seen, must now be examined from the viewpoint of Heidegger's chapters on temporality and historicity. The question leading the reading of these chapters will be that of how we can understand authentic identity as something that displays itself in a worldly, temporal and historical realm as well. If no longer primarily the falling of the they, with the kind of concerned subjectivity that belongs to this existential, what, then, is the measure by way of which authentic Dasein discovers a specific orientation in the world in terms of belonging? How is this to be understood in relation to self-identity as responsibility for the wholeness of being? Can this be accounted for at all within the structure of *SZ*?

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<sup>355</sup> Mansbach (2002), p. 57.

<sup>356</sup> "Diese ausgezeichnete, im Dasein selbst durch sein Gewissen bezeugte eigentliche Erschlossenheit — *das verschwiegene, angstbereitete Sichentwerfen auf das eigenste Schuldigsein* — nennen wir die *Entschlossenheit*.", *SZ*, ¶ 60, pp. 296-297.

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 64, p. 322.

<sup>358</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 60, p. 298.

## 7. The problem of temporality and historicity

In paragraph 66, Heidegger discusses how the inauthentic, actualizing use of possibilities is a matter of using one's *time*, of investing it into that with which one is concerned.<sup>359</sup> In so doing, Heidegger claims in a later section, Dasein necessarily experiences time as filled with holes, as something which it continuously fails to occupy in any permanent manner.<sup>360</sup> This loss is therefore complementary to the usage of time in which, as Heidegger writes, Dasein *devours itself* by way of this use.<sup>361</sup> This should now be explained.

Heidegger's argument is that the phenomenon of being whole coincides with the phenomenon of authentic temporality.<sup>362</sup> The projection of possibilities are temporally understood in terms of "future as coming towards" (*Zukunft*). With this, Heidegger does not refer to a forthcoming moment, but to the very temporal dimension of the fact that Dasein exists as incomplete, as something which has "not yet" fulfilled itself, and so is existentially directed towards completion.<sup>363</sup>

What is simultaneously opened in this releasement of possibilities, is the "having been" (*Gewesenheit*) of Dasein, the temporality of that end of its existence which constitutes its thrownness. In the future as coming towards, this thrownness is brought out into the free openness of existence, the space of the unfolding of meaning.

Finally, the temporal dimension in which this two-directedness occurs, according to Heidegger, is the "present" (*Gegenwart*).<sup>364</sup> And it is on the basis of this dimension, the dimension in which Dasein performs its presence in the world, in which it encounters its entities, that we again can compare authentic Dasein to the inauthentic. Inauthentic Dasein cannot grasp temporality as a phenomenon that is essentially characterized by wholeness, but comprehends the present as its predominant aspect.<sup>365</sup> Its time is therefore fragmentized, according to how Heidegger describes the mode of awaiting and fulfilling possibilities. Inauthentic Dasein is either present the now, in a manner that makes it forgetful of the future, or in the future, forgetful of the now. Of course, Dasein can also "live in the past" and suppress the present as well as the future. In all these comportments, it must inevitably perceive time as uneven, constituted by heights and gaps which Dasein, once again, can try to control by way

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<sup>359</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 66, p. 333.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 79, p. 409.

<sup>361</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 66, p. 333.

<sup>362</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 65, p. 326.

<sup>363</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 325.

<sup>364</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 326.

<sup>365</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 68, p. 347-349.

of planning or using possibilities.<sup>366</sup> All these aspects are kept together in the previously mentioned understanding of being as something which is created by Dasein itself through its articulations and projections, thereby giving priority to the presence of these acts. Being is viewed as something which is first given in the accomplishments of the different concerns with beings.

But the presence, the “now” of authentic Dasein is something altogether different. It encompasses the future and the having been in a respect that preserves and brings about temporality as a phenomenon of gathered completeness, not fragmentation. Heidegger captures this temporality in terms of “the moment of vision” (*Augenblick*, literary “glance of an eye”). The moment of vision is the moment in which the meaningfulness of the temporality of one's existence is established, as the past is redeemed in the direction towards a future, and the future retrieved from a past which one has not chosen, but nevertheless shouldered. The present is here constituted as a moment in which meaning can be brought out actively in a new projection. The moment of vision de-objectifies time, as time ceases to be experienced as a pre-established framework, as a collectively accessible, objective and natural linearity, and instead emerges as one's own.<sup>367</sup> This does, however, not mean that it is “subjective”, but that it reveals itself as Dasein's own “horizon of being” (“*Horizont des Seins*”), rather than something which must be filled by means of different interferences with beings.<sup>368</sup> The moment of vision is an occurrence that opens up the whole temporality as an *εκστατικόν*, as an absolute fundamental phenomenon which cannot be derived from calendrical time, nor can be circumscribed by it.<sup>369</sup> Time here manifests itself as an original happening, as a temporalization where time becomes experienceable as something *in itself full and meaningful*. This fundamentality can only arise as Dasein completely surrenders the understanding of itself as the locus of a production of time – time here being something which one “gives” to oneself, saves, or loses – and instead recognizes itself as granted by means of the own finitude.<sup>370</sup>

It is here, in the moment of vision, that Heidegger's understanding of identity culminates. It is namely in this mode of temporality, that a constancy of the self is attained, and Dasein gains an access to its being.<sup>371</sup>

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<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 337-339.

<sup>367</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 338.

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 83, p. 437.

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 65, p. 329.

<sup>370</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 329-331.

<sup>371</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 72, p. 375.

Because this establishes a relation to the future, the past and the present in their interrelatedness, the moment of vision is also a moment of authentic interpretation, articulation and understanding. Things encountered within authentic temporality are drawn out of their staticity, out of their character of spatiotemporal firmness, according to which they are viewed as either “owned” by Dasein, or withdrawn from it, both temporally and spatially. The moment of vision reveals them in their independence, as something more than “objects”, as having an integrity of their own.<sup>372</sup>

But how can this kind of identity, the constancy of ek-static temporality, together with its enhanced disclosure of things, be anchored and shared in a world?

It is at this point that Heidegger’s account of the historicity of Dasein must be taken into account. For not only is Dasein temporal in the respect that its temporality is a three-dimensional wholeness, but the time of existence must equally be grasped as a “stretching along” (*Erstreckung*) between a factual birth, and an individuated death.<sup>373</sup> With this account, Heidegger approaches a historical dimension of facticity, as Dasein’s thrownness is not merely considered as an existential-ontological matter, but a socio-historical as well. Dasein is thrown into collectively given contexts of which it itself is not the original author. For this reason, there is no conception of identity that can avoid the dimension of historicity. Temporality *is* historicity, Heidegger states; history is what gives temporality a definite form.<sup>374</sup> In one or the other way, identity must be an articulation of oneself in terms of a historical givenness.

For authentic Dasein, it is the moment of vision that determines its hermeneutical-historical situation. As projecting towards a future, one is always in debt to history – but the question is how one comports oneself towards this indebtedness, and it is this question that will settle the comparison between Butler and Heidegger within the framework of *SZ*. The moment of vision redeems historicity’s character of a force that *limits* existence and its freedom of projections, instead transforming it into a phenomenon which forms the very basis of selfhood. It is in giving itself over to one’s history in this authentic respect, that is, in surrendering to one’s debt to history, that one can, as Heidegger puts it, “repeat” history towards a future.<sup>375</sup> This act of acknowledgement transforms one’s relation to time as well as to history; the phe-

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<sup>372</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 60, pp. 299-301.

<sup>373</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 72, p. 373.

<sup>374</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 74, pp. 382-383.

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 68, p. 339.

nomenon of primordial historicity, Dasein's *historicality* (*Geschichtlichkeit*),<sup>376</sup> is also an existential that can be confirmed in its ontology only within the existential leap of resoluteness. Resoluteness disrupts the hermeneutic of Dasein and accordingly its historicality, breaking its immediate identification with the present, only in order to restore this relation in an authentic manner. The break is necessary as a preparation for a recognition of the phenomenon of historicality. Without the leap, history can only be sighted as a phenomenon that signifies distance in relation to Dasein's temporality. But for authentic Dasein, in the moment of vision, history approaches as a phenomenon which has Dasein's own ek-statically temporal being as its middle. Ruin writes: "The *Augenblick* marks the redeeming transformation of a necessity into a free task, the enigmatic point at which the negative weight of the past is released in the form of a force in the present."<sup>377</sup> In other words, it is the notion of the moment of vision, together with the fundamental ontology which grounds it, that allows Heidegger to delineate an alternative to the sociality and historicity of "the they", to falling and inauthenticity. Central to this differentiation between authenticity and inauthenticity, although Heidegger does not yet emphasize it with these words himself, is the ontological difference. Dasein becomes itself, retains its authentic temporality and its being, in so far as it recognizes itself to be *ontologically* alienated from itself, thus unfolding this ontological alienation as what, paradoxically, is most own to it. This means, in other words, to allow oneself to discover a form of alienation which *does not originate from the differentiation between Dasein and Dasein, neither in a historical, nor a structural respect*, but from the difference between Dasein and its being. Its *thus-being*, being there at all, in space and time, is the most original characteristic of Dasein, yet what is never brought about by Dasein itself, neither in the form of an "I", nor in the form of a "they". This is why Heidegger, very accurately, depicts anxiety as the state of mind that grips us whenever we are confronted with the nakedness of our *Da*. This state of mind reveals that the potential of being whole and complete, is nothing that can be brought about by worldly concerns, but on the contrary is distressing to the everyday perception of who one is, to one's natural sense of self. Self-constancy is therefore not equal to the representation of self as substance, but rather the openness in which we encounter beings, including ourselves – it is the original and most primordial realm of "my" being-a-self, or the fact that I can perceive myself as a *Da*, and thus perceive and be affected by other beings as well. The moment of vision is the temporal-historical dimension of this openness.

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<sup>376</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 6, pp. 19-20.

<sup>377</sup> Ruin (1994), p. 194.

But as the moment of vision means a new form of openness in relation to one's historicity, it means to allow oneself to be claimed by history as well, a claim which is mediated in the form of other historical existences. In this context, Ruin interprets the call of conscience as the call of previous historical voices announcing themselves as the debt of Dasein, thus stressing the indissolubility of Dasein's thrownness and its historicity.<sup>378</sup> To this, however, I would add that the call can be history's announcement of itself *because* it is the revelation of the nullity of Dasein's existence. This means that it cannot be finally decided if it is the shattering experience of nullity that draws these voices to Dasein, or if the latter are what first reveals the nullity to it. As Heidegger's account of being-Guilty demonstrated (*SZ*, ¶ 58, p. 283), Dasein's indebtedness must equally be comprehended in terms of a guilt pertaining to the phenomenology of being in a world, being a *Da*, and thus falling and being dispersed in beings – that is, not merely pertaining to being in history, insofar as history is understandable in terms of a temporal being-with. This, I believe, is important to emphasize for the purpose of showing that the self-confrontation that Heidegger here depicts, is *not* primarily that between the subject of one Dasein and another – mediated through space or through time – but between Dasein and its being whole, which takes place *through* its conversation with the relevant voices of history. When Dasein's historicity collides with the factual, collective history in a positive respect, when it can find its selfhood in terms of an openness to its indebtedness, and simultaneously unlock history towards a future by means of this authentic selfhood, its historicity can also become a "fate" (*Schicksal*) and a "destiny" (*Geschick*). While the former concept denotes the event of the historical temporalization of individuated Dasein, the latter describes this temporalization as something which involves a shared history.<sup>379</sup>

And so, Heidegger summarizes, "One's existence in the moment of vision temporalizes itself as something that has been stretched along in a way which is fatefully whole in the sense of the authentic historical *constancy* of the Self."<sup>380</sup> With these words, we approach a conclusion about Heidegger's understanding of identity within *SZ*. For Heidegger, Dasein's being as ek-static temporality constitutes its authentic selfhood and identity. At the same time, identity is somehow an occurrence which is historical by nature. Following this latter aspect, identity involves a world, other human beings and their temporality, as it appears in the response to

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<sup>378</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 128-129.

<sup>379</sup> *SZ*, ¶ 74, p. 384.

<sup>380</sup> "Die augenblickliche Existenz zeitigt sich als schicksalhaft ganze Erstrecktheit im Sinne der eigentlichen, geschichtlichen *Ständigkeit* des Selbst.", *Ibid.*, ¶ 79, p. 410.

their voices. Thus, it must obtain a historically defined expression. In a concluding paragraph, Heidegger writes:

*Only an entity which, in its being, is essentially **futural** so that it is free for its death and can let itself be thrown back upon its factual “there” by shattering itself against death – that is to say, only an entity which, as futural, is equiprimordially in the process of **having-been**, can, by handing down to itself the possibility it has inherited, take over its own thrownness and be in **the moment of vision** for ‘its time’. Only authentic temporality which is at the same time finite, makes possible something like fate – that is to say, authentic historicity.<sup>381</sup>*

To be in the moment of vision, means to emerge as a distinct historical voice, in the sense that history itself gathers itself to a decision in authentic Dasein. As authentically temporal, one becomes a thrust of history, the originator of a new collective temporality or identity. Yet, an incompatibility prevails between these two dimensions of identity. This incompatibility is perhaps most clearly demonstrated when Heidegger speaks of the authentic relation to history as being a matter of “choosing a hero”.<sup>382</sup> A statement of this kind reveals a tension between identity understood as an actively brought out belonging to one’s ek-statically given being, and as a belonging to a particular, historical situation and the world that is given within it. Heidegger’s aim is seemingly to propose that a belonging to one’s own being “concretely” means to take responsibility for one’s factual history, where those inherited possibilities that are relevant for a life framed by the innermost possibility of death are distinguished, appropriated and brought into the future in the moment of vision. Thus, the collective and individual level intersect.

But Heidegger cannot, within this outline, provide a concluding answer to the question of *who* it is that makes this resolute choice, or *what* it is that inaugurates and delineates it. What is the occurrence of a choice of this kind, given that Dasein lacks the status of subject? Is it still historical, or is it merely personal? Heidegger’s derivation of historicity from the temporality of Dasein leads to a widely recognized aporia.<sup>383</sup> And it is in this aporia that he and Butler once more converge. Understood within the framework of this study, the problem could be viewed as follows: The moment of vision is the moment in which historically transmitted cat-

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<sup>381</sup> ”Nur Seiendes, das wesentlich in seinem Sein **zukünftig** ist, so daß es frei für seinen Tod an ihm zerschellend auf sein faktisches Da sich zurückwerfen lassen kann, das heißt nur Seiendes, das als zukünftiges gleichursprünglich **gewesend** ist, kann, sich selbst die ererbte Möglichkeit überliefernd, die eigene Geworfenheit übernehmen und **augenblicklich** sein für ‘seine Zeit’. Nur eigentliche Zeitlichkeit, die zugleich endlich ist, macht so etwas wie Schicksal, das heißt eigentliche Geschichtlichkeit möglich.”, *Ibid.*, ¶ 74, p. 385.

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>383</sup> For an extensive discussion on this, see Ruin (1994), particularly pp. 140, 156, 159, 162, and 164-165.

egories, institutions and norms are both temporally and spatially disclosed in the living temporality of resolute Dasein. However, if Dasein has a historical existence only as a consequence of the fact that it is temporal, then it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the "thrust" of historicity, the call of its voices, is something that Dasein itself somehow inaugurates. There is a circularity here: on the one hand it is only by means of temporality that resoluteness is possible,<sup>384</sup> implying that it is the possibility of a whole temporality that enables resoluteness as an authentic, factual choice of a specific possibility brought forward by history and enacted in the present.

But on the other hand, the moment of vision can also be interpreted as what is enabled through a listening to the call of history itself, as in Ruin's interpretation. According to this interpretation, it is in the listening to its own indebtedness to history, that Dasein can be led into an appropriation of its thrownness as a meaningful finitude. But because historicity is told to be grounded in temporality,<sup>385</sup> it is the inverted relation that Heidegger seems to forfeit here, namely, that it is in recognizing and bearing its own nullity, its own ek-static being, that Dasein can acquire a sight that can view this selfhood as a historically specified task and identity. The temporality of the moment of vision would then be that which decides upon history. Yet again, the question remaining is what decides upon the moment of vision. What is the necessity of this event? From where does the call of conscience come, and whom do I finally respond to in this call – myself, other living or dead Daseins, or being itself? How could we avoid giving an answer here pointing back at human subjectivity, be it the own or that of others? It is a similar problem that Butler would remain by in her thinking, being unable to formulate what decides upon subversion; what makes subversion subversive, a break with preestablished structures? What is the quality and character of the impetus that runs counter to these structures?

Heidegger's aim could of course have been to demonstrate reciprocity, to show that the moment of vision is the moment where Dasein makes itself available for its factual past *and* the moment in which this history is transformed through the ek-static moment of this self. But the point is that the dynamics and meaning of a reciprocity of this kind cannot be accounted for within this system and terminology. In the end, this set of problems illuminates the urgency of an even more radical critique of the metaphysical category of the subject and its subjectivity, as well as a new outline for how being in itself can be thought. The framework of SZ

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<sup>384</sup> SZ, ¶ 14, p. 65.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.*, ¶ 74, p. 386.

leaves no room for the issue of what it means that Dasein is in being in the sense that being decides upon *it*. If history is that which decides upon Dasein, how is history something other than the temporality of others, namely a manifestation of being itself? From the viewpoint of later Heidegger, what remains unthematized here is the ontological difference as such. Although being one of the presuppositions for the argument in *SZ*, it is not developed from the perspective of being. Explained from the perspective of human existence only, the implications of the ontological difference remain hidden. The moment of vision could therefore risk to be understood in terms of a private-subjective moment of appropriation of one's own being, while resoluteness, as disentangled from this, becomes an equally private-subjective choice of historical possibilities and identities. As in Butler, the choices through which one's specific identity is instated, would thus become a matter of compromise between the more immediate aspect of one's subjectivity, and that which is mediated by historical structures originally directed by the other. Left with this oscillation between Dasein as individuated temporality, and as historicity, what is lost out of sight is the question of being itself, how being is that which ultimately makes the decision.

To come to terms with the question of Dasein's relation to history, and of historicity as such, Heidegger understood that the question of being must be deepened and developed separately from Dasein as individuated temporality. Heidegger's critique towards himself will also further help to demonstrate how the presumptions of Butler's problem can be critically elucidated and turned. It is important to remember that an invitation to a critical inquiry of this kind is left open by Butler herself, exactly through the fact that the situation of power is not unequivocally characterized as ontological. As we have seen, her reflection on it as a historical matter, implies the possibility of an altered relationship to identity and historicity. History viewed from the perspective of being itself, is a perspective through which this possibility could be thought.

This fact implies a further step towards the question of who the human being is as well, as the query of what it means for it to belong to being. For if the task is not merely to think being beyond subject metaphysics, but beyond object metaphysics as well, then the human being is by no means left out of the picture. On the contrary, it is considered more radically in its essence.<sup>386</sup> Not only the question of being, but the question of who we are and what it means to belong to ourselves in identity, must now be reconsidered from a new perspective.

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<sup>386</sup> See *Beiträge*, p. 48.

## Chapter Five. Reconsidering being and Dasein: To be defined by a sending

### 1. On Heidegger's "turn"

In the previous chapter, I attempted to demonstrate how the inconsistencies of the analytic of Dasein in *SZ* can be understood in terms of an ambiguity of identity. In his major work, Heidegger shows how identity is a matter of opening oneself to one's being in the constitution of an authentic self-relation, revealed in the enhanced and meaning-giving temporality of Dasein. As Dasein, the human being discovers that the condition for being oneself is an affirmation of the "notness" (*Nichtheit*) constituting existence.<sup>387</sup> Viewed existentially, Dasein must learn to avow the impossibility of producing its own being and its time. This effort can be compared to the Hegelian understanding of negativity in the act of the negation of the negation, as a matter of acknowledging a fundamental void in life, of which the human consciousness is responsible insofar as it exists and thinks. To belong to oneself, to be authentically identical with oneself, is according to both Heidegger and Hegel only possible as an admission of the fundamental foreignness of being. I have also shown that it is in this respect, above all, that their accounts are different from that of Butler, who does not think identity in relation to being. For both Hegel and Heidegger, this is likewise the condition for being a part of a determinate history, as identity also implies a temporally given and situated being in the world.

Returning to Heidegger's thinking, how can this phenomenon of being oneself authentically, of standing open to being on the basis of one's ek-static temporality, occur and be articulated in a shared and finite world history? Is this authenticity, in terms of an anticipation of death, a structure or phenomenon preceding and grounding history? Can it thus be regarded as an act on the basis of which Dasein resolutely inscribes itself in history and thereby "chooses" an appropriate historical identity? Or is the opposite rather the case, namely, that certain historical identities and presences call Dasein into this resoluteness? But if the latter is a more accurate way to account for this happening, the question would be what history and its voices are in the first place. Clearly, the latter alternative could not be conceived of as a mere multiplicity of Dasein, as this would mean that we still take Dasein's temporality and authenticity as ground. Following Heidegger's philosophical development after *SZ*, identity would no longer constitute a willful strive on the part of Dasein, as something it engages in on the basis

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<sup>387</sup> *SZ*, ¶ 58, p. 285.

of its own authority. But neither, will I demonstrate, would it be a matter of passivity and subjection to history, history thus understood as a constellation of the acts and wills of others.

After *SZ*, the question of identity must be considered from the viewpoint of Heidegger's turn. The reconsideration of Dasein, being and history that follows from this inner transformation of his thinking in many respects revolves around the concept of *Ereignis*. With this notion, Heidegger approaches being as an event of disclosure which primordially and essentially involves an enactment on the part of the human being. This is the event that discloses the belonging-together.

The conversion in Heidegger's thinking is often specified as a turn from the emphasis on Dasein's temporality as the horizon of being, to the attempt to think the historicity of being, or being from out of itself, as giving and temporalizing itself. But how are we to understand this self-reference on the part of being? How could it be apprehended in a manner that does not repeat the metaphysical impulse to reify that which is given to thought?

Heidegger's answer is that it should be comprehended according to its *giving* of itself for and *as* Dasein. Therefore, these two themes are intertwined: on the one hand, the turn can be summarized as Heidegger's attempt to understand how being temporalizes itself on the basis of its own activity, and on the other hand as the attempt to understand how this is enabled as Dasein. Consequently, Dasein would not remain a term for every human existence, but is now employed as a signification of the open mode in which the human being is respondent to being. It is the simultaneous manifestation of being and the dimension of Dasein, in which the human being participates, its dynamics and happening, that Heidegger will attempt to explicate with the terms of the event and the belonging-together. In this context, Heidegger changes the spell of the word to *Da-sein*, in order to convey this new meaning of the concept.<sup>388</sup>

However, to unfold the meaning of these notions, of what they aim to convey, it is necessary to follow the questioning mode from out of which they were created and to which they refer – a matter that the secondary literature on this phase of Heidegger's thinking often tend to neglect. These concepts cannot be brought out in terms of a consolidation of a new, more

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<sup>388</sup> The textual and thematic interconnectedness between the turn and the event is confirmed in sections such as the following: "Enowning has its innermost occurrence and its widest reach in the turning [*die Kehre*]." ("Das *Ereignis* hat sein innerstes Geschehen und seinen weitesten Ausgriff in der *Kehre*."); "And *within the turning*: Only the grounding of *Da-sein*, preparing the preparedness for the charming-moving-onto removal-onto the truth of being, brings what hears – and in listening belongs – to the hint of the befalling enownment." ("Und *in der Kehre*: Nur Gründung des *Da-seins*, die Bereitung der Bereitschaft zur berückenden Entrückung in die Wahrheit des Seyns, bringt das Hörige und Zugehörige für den Wink der anfallenden Ereignung."), *Beiträge*, p. 407. P. Emad's and K. Maly's 1999 translation of *Beiträge* as *Contributions to Philosophy. From Enowning* will be used throughout this study, hereinafter referred to as *Contributions*. Here, p. 286.

“sacred” terminology, as a new kind of metaphysics, but only be illuminated through a return to the ontological tension out of which they first arise.

## 2. “Letter on ‘Humanism’ “: ek-static being

*BH*, the letter written by Heidegger to Jean Beaufret in 1946, contains the first published, explicit discussion of the turn. In this writing, Heidegger comments on the problem of *SZ* as being both a matter of a general misreading, and the consequence of an inner tension within the work in question. If one takes the thrown projection as a reference to a “representational positing”, he holds, then one has indeed misunderstood it as an operation on the part of human subjectivity.<sup>389</sup> For the intention of this analytic was consistently to lead Dasein into an “ecstatic inherence in the truth of being”.<sup>390</sup> This and nothing else is what the interrogation of the horizon of being amounts to. To stand in the self-manifestation of being is what is meant by the word existence. Putting emphasis on the prefix Ek- in *Ek-sistenz*, Heidegger's purpose is to highlight that the word essentially means to be outside of oneself.<sup>391</sup> To exist is to be engendered by being, which is not of human origin, and the authentic existence is the mode of an acknowledgement of this foundation. To this belongs a disclosure of the fact that one does not own or bring forth this existence through activity and interactions in the world. According to Heidegger, it was the task of the planned third part of *SZ* to explicate this.

However, the publishing was withdrawn as Heidegger concluded that the “misunderstandings” of the work were not merely an error on the part of the reader, but that the turn of perspective which was implicated here would require a new language, a reconsideration of all the components of the inquiry into being employed in this work.<sup>392</sup> In other words, the existentials conveying an activity in authentic Dasein, including the term and phenomenon of resoluteness, were not meant to accentuate Dasein as a founder, as a subject, as a solidity for its own being. Far more, the operative projection of Dasein referred to the active turn towards something which *undermines* the representation of oneself as a grounder and subject, namely being itself. The word “ek-static”, again, means to be out of location, and ek-static temporality is the moment where this vibrating non-locality, revealing the foreign and overwhelming character of existence, displays itself explicitly. Thus, projection and resolution together con-

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<sup>389</sup> “vorstellendes Setzen”, *BH*, p. 327. I will follow F. Capuzzi's translation of this text, published in W. McNeill (ed.), *Pathmarks* (1998), hereinafter referred to as *LH*; here, p. 249.

<sup>390</sup> “des ekstatischen Innestehens in der Wahrheit des Seins”, *Ibid.*, p. 325. [p. 248].

<sup>391</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 323-324.

<sup>392</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 328. On Heidegger's claim that already *SZ* attempted to free itself from the predominance of subject metaphysics in the question of being, and that the turn therefore would be inaugurated in the major work in question, see *IuD*, p. 150.

stitute the openness to this dislocation, enabling Dasein to be ripped out of an existence fascinated by beings and the interactions with them, into the meaning of the utterness of its presence as such.

Being is in this sense something which claims Dasein, and in a certain respect deprives it of its worldly orientations. Put differently, it is a re-orientation or turn of Dasein which breaks with the everyday structure of care and action. It inverts Dasein's conception of who or what it is that prescribes and gives it orientations, aims, or an identity; it inverts its understanding of the very ontology of identity and self-fulfillment. What the conceptual framework of *SZ* did not admit, was the proper expression and enactment of this exposure to being. Yet according to himself, Heidegger was from the beginning preoccupied with the task of finding a new way of understanding the relation between being and Dasein, something which his later writings, all from different perspectives, would try to establish and articulate with a new language.

Following this, it is no coincidence that the thought of a turn here is presented in the context of a reconsideration of humanism, as a reevaluation of what it means to be as a human being. For Heidegger, this implied a confrontation with metaphysics as well as his own early thinking, exactly due to its traces of a metaphysical orientation; for metaphysics in the age of modernity is inevitably subject metaphysics, as the tendency to found an understanding of being in the cognitive capacities or the life of the human being.

Metaphysics reflects beings in their being, but not being itself, Heidegger had argued since long. But to ask about the truth of being itself requires that the question of the ontological difference between being and beings is posed. This was the question that according to him had not been properly treated within the occident tradition of thought. Neither, therefore, could metaphysics pose the question of the way in which the essence of man belongs to the truth of being.

Applying this perspective to our present situation, we can add, the neglect of the question of being would imply a lack of orientation in the contemporary thinking of identity as well. Following Heidegger, in order to know who we are when we are "ourselves", we must first distinguish what it means to be as a human being.<sup>393</sup> It is along this line of argumentation that Heidegger develops his critique of Sartre's account of existentialism. Heidegger summarizes Sartre's position with the latter's assertion that "we are precisely in a situation where there are only human beings". For Heidegger, the opposite was in fact true: "we are precisely in a situa-

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<sup>393</sup> *BH*, pp. 322-323.

tion where principally there is being”.<sup>394</sup> In different ways, Heidegger repeats this view throughout the letter: namely, that existence is not to be understood from out of the human being, but on the basis of being, as this is the “dimension of the ecstasis” of the human.<sup>395</sup> It is also expressed as the argument that the human is not the “lord” (*Herr*) of being, but its “shepherd” (*Hirt*).<sup>396</sup>

To summarize, Heidegger's turn leads him towards a new experience and view of the relation between being and the human being – not in terms of a reversed hierarchy, but as a new understanding of an inherent reciprocity. By way of this, *BH* elaborates on a new conception of Dasein, with the aim to bring out how the human being *is* in such a way that it constitutes a medium for self-yielding being. It is this understanding that Heidegger expresses in terms of Da-sein.

But the temporal meaning of the claim “precisely in a situation where principally there is being” must be rightly understood. Heidegger does not merely think this turn as a fact present at hand in his own historical now, somehow forgotten during the epoch of metaphysics. Rather, this is a statement that only has its legitimacy when spoken from within the turn itself, as the very performance of this existential shift. The temporality of this occurrence is from here on to be thought as a manifestation of the temporality of being itself.

### 3. The sending of being

An expression that Heidegger sometimes uses to address being as something of non-human origin, yet at the same time as something which essentially concerns us, is “there is” or “it gives” (“*es gibt*”).<sup>397</sup> Being is what is “given” to the human being, and is perceivable as existence, but in such a way that the origin of being is withdrawn from this existence. Being cannot be derived from anything *in* being, and therefore merely be addressed as a “thus” which lets something emerge. The task would therefore be to explore the circumstance that we always live and act in a response to something that is already given, or rather the fact *that* something is already given. It is not the ontical givenness of different beings that must be minded according to this thought, as all beings are manifestations of a certain “already” that has let them appear. Neither is it the world as a collection and conflation of these beings that Heidegger has in mind as “given” here. It is rather the dimensionality of their spatiotemporal-

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<sup>394</sup> “précisé-ment nous sommes sur un plan où il y a seulement des hommes”; “précisément nous sommes sur un plan où il y a principalement l'Être”, *Ibid.*, p. 334. [*LH*, p. 254].

<sup>395</sup> “Dimension des Ekstatischen”, *Ibid.*, pp. 333-334. [*Ibid.*].

<sup>396</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 342. [p. 260].

<sup>397</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 334. [p. 254].

ty as such, understood as the openness which allows for the spatial and temporal world to arise, holding it and letting it be a world that concerns us.<sup>398</sup> Recollecting Hölderlin's fragment again, it is a question of the fact that we already experience being as something independent from beings, implicitly and indirectly, when we begin to speak, act and relate to things. We already know being as a measure by way of which things are given in their limitations and possibilities, and as the freedom or spaciousness allowing us to project ourselves on the world, to be conscious of ourselves as agents in it, and as perceivers of it. Being is something by which we are already measured, and yet that which remains veiled to everyday life, thus leading Heidegger to denote it as the most remote *and* the closest.<sup>399</sup> In our everyday orientation towards being, we are, as it were, lost in beings.

In the essay "Time and Being", originally held as a lecture at the University of Freiburg in 1962 as an "anti-metaphysical" response to the own major work, Heidegger explains how this gift of being holds an inner dynamic of disclosure and withdrawal, that also determines the directions and constellations of our philosophical tradition:

In the beginning of Western thinking, being is thought, but not the "It gives" as such. The latter withdraws in favor of the gift which It gives. That gift is thought and conceptualized from then on exclusively as being with regard to beings. A giving which gives only its gift, but in the giving holds itself back and withdraws, such a giving we call sending. According to the meaning of giving which is to be thought in this way, being – that which It gives – is what is sent.<sup>400</sup>

In *BH*, he writes concisely that "This 'there is / it gives' rules as the destiny of being."<sup>401</sup> Being's giving of itself constitutes its own sending, its *Geschick* of itself. With this term, we return to a word which Capuzzi, following an acknowledged translation, refers to precisely as "destiny", and which, as shown, is used already in *SZ*. But, I argue, understanding Heidegger's alteration of this word, his new consideration of the phenomenon behind it, demands that we initially suspend the overload of associations activated with the translation to "destiny". For this purpose, I will, when possible, employ the more literal translation "send-

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<sup>398</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>399</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 331.

<sup>400</sup> "Im Beginn des abendländischen Denkens wird das Sein gedacht, aber nicht das 'Es gibt' als solches. Dieses entzieht sich zugunsten der Gabe, die Es gibt, welche Gabe künftighin ausschließlich als Sein im Hinblick auf das Seiende gedacht und in einen Begriff gebracht wird. Ein Geben, das nur seine Gabe gibt, sich selbst jedoch dabei zurückhält und entzieht, ein solches Geben nennen wir das Schikken. Nach dem so zu denkenden Sinn von Geben ist Sein, das es gibt, das Geschickte.", "Zeit und Sein", *GA* 14, p. 12. Henceforth referred to as *ZS*. I will use the 2002 edition of J. Stambaugh's 1977 translation of this text as "Time and Being", published in the volume *On Time and Being*, here p. 8. Henceforth, this translation will be referred to as *TB*.

<sup>401</sup> "Dieses 'es gibt' waltet als das *Geschick* des Seins.", *BH*, p. 335. [*LH*, p. 255].

ing”. And *our* sending or destiny, it is said above, is to forget being as this noncontingent, enabling occurrence.

In the essay “Moira” from the beginning of the 50's, Heidegger describes this sending as a “*Zuteilung von Sein*”, an *allotment* of being.<sup>402</sup> This characterization stresses that being does not diminish in its self-givenness. Its giving belongs to its essence, the latter thus not emptied in the sending. In *The Principle of Reason* it is argued that *Geschick* is to be grasped as “being as the responsive [*sich zusagend*], clearing-furnishing of the temporal play-space for whatever appears in whatever way – beings”.<sup>403</sup>

The human existence is the form of life that is explicitly let into this sending.<sup>404</sup> Yet at the same time, this fact is something that must be actively appropriated by this existence, as its own articulated destiny. Returning to *BH*, Heidegger here explicates that *Dasein* only is as a “throw of being”, as “a destinal sending”. As *Dasein*, the existence of the human being is a matter of something sent.<sup>405</sup> On the basis of this, the implications of the new notion of *Da-sein* are brought out: *Da-sein* is something which the human being either does or does not shoulder, depending on whether it can assume the strength to care for the elucidation of its being-there in its own right. On the basis of this reconsideration, Heidegger states that the task of the human being is to find “what is fitting” (*das Schickliche*) in its own being, to find that which corresponds to the collectively given sending in which it is located.<sup>406</sup> In other words, it must discover how that which is primarily considered as a contingent identity, destiny or interiority, is understandable as a manifestation of a certain sending of being, holding a collective world.

It is this sending, being in its manifestation of itself, that Heidegger attempts to think as a matter of a temporalization within being itself – as being’s own historicity.<sup>407</sup> A whole set of concepts etymologically related to the ground word *Geschehen* (“happening”) is activated in a sentence such as “The happening of history occurs essentially as the destiny of the truth of being and from it.”<sup>408</sup> In *Beiträge*, they are even more extended, including both *Geschehnis* (“occurrence”) and *Schicksal*.<sup>409</sup> *Die Geschichte des Seyns* bears this thought in its very title,

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<sup>402</sup> *GA* 7, p. 256.

<sup>403</sup> “Sein als sich-zusagendes, lichtendes Einräumen des Zeit-Spiel-Raumes für das je so oder so Erscheinende, das Seiende.“, *Der Satz vom Grund*, *GA* 10, p. 112. English translation by R. Lilly (1991), here p. 75.

<sup>404</sup> *BH*, p. 324.

<sup>405</sup> “Wurf des Seyns”; “des schickend *Geschicklichen*”, *Ibid.*, p. 327. [*LH*, p. 249].

<sup>406</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 331. [p. 252].

<sup>407</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 363.

<sup>408</sup> “Das Geschehen der Ge-schichte west als das *Geschick* der Wahrheit des Seins aus diesem”, *Ibid.*, p. 335. [p. 255].

<sup>409</sup> *Beiträge*, p. 28. [*Contributions*, p. 20].

and contains a manifold of varying expressions of this new track.<sup>410</sup> Charles Guignon brings together the interconnectedness of the three central terms in the following conclusion: “the history (*Geschichte*) of being is a happening (*Geschehen*) that constitutes a destiny (*Geschick*)”.<sup>411</sup>

The existence of the human being is according to this argument, and in contrast to the argument of *SZ*, to be understood as being-historically given. Its historicity is understandable on the basis of the historicity of being.

In a detailed consideration of what this shift entails philosophically for Heidegger, Ruin suggests that it is precisely the analysis of historicity and historicality in *SZ*, rather than that of temporality, that allows Heidegger to develop a philosophy of the historicity of being. But insofar as historicity in this work is grounded in the time of *Dasein* as the realm of a production of meaning, the post-*SZ* conception of historical transmission and indebtedness can no longer be thought in terms of the historicity of *Dasein*. Yet, it is nevertheless important to recognize that the account of *Dasein*'s historicity indeed from the beginning contains the project to think “a structure of dependency and disclosure, a disclosive ‘movement’ that we are and to which we belong”.<sup>412</sup> – in other words, a reference to a measure external to the own temporality, to an address which has already claimed one’s life and world.

When we think of the historical within this new framework, it is crucial not to lose sight of the question of *what* we refer to as “historical” here, namely being. In a section in *ZS*, Heidegger states that being has no history in the same way that “a city or a people” has its history. Rather, he says with a formulation which is far from clear at a first glance, the “history-like in the history of Being” does only determine itself from out of the way in which being discloses itself.<sup>413</sup> The transformations of being are self-referring, meaning that they refer

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<sup>410</sup> *GA* 69, henceforth referred to as *GS*. Cf. p. 93: “Die Geschichte ist Geschichte des Seyns und deshalb Geschichte der *Wahrheit* des Seyns und deshalb Geschichte der *Gründung* der *Wahrheit* und deshalb Geschichte als *Da-sein*“ (“History is the history of being, and therefore history of the truth of being, and therefore history of the grounding of truth, and therefore history as *Da-sein*”). Translated by J. Powell and W. McNeill as *The History of Being* (2015). The translation will be employed throughout this study, hereinafter referred to as *HB*. Here, p. 79. See also *GS*, pp. 93-95.

<sup>411</sup> Charles Guignon, “The history of Being”, *Companion to Heidegger’s Contributions to Philosophy* (2001), p. 393. For another definition of being-historical thinking, see Vallega-Neu (2003), p. 31: “First, it refers to a re-thinking of the history of being in its different epochs in our Western tradition out of and within the motion of the essential occurrence of the truth of being. Second, it refers also to a transformation of thinking which no longer places itself, as it were, against the history of being in the way in which it questions this history, but rather which finds itself caught up and determined by being’s historicity.”

<sup>412</sup> Ruin (1994), pp. 169-170. Quotation on p. 170.

<sup>413</sup> “Das Geschichtartige der Geschichte des Seins”, *ZS*, pp. 11-12. [*TB*, p. 8].

back to an inner measure and dynamic within being, rather than the occurrences within world history, caused by the interactions of contingent beings.<sup>414</sup>

The point here, is that being is not an ontological entity haphazardly varying according to how it appears in different times. Far more, these “times” are to be comprehended as *epochs*, and as such they manifest different aspects or measurements of the way in which being reveals itself to humans and their world. Based on this, “The history of Being means destiny of Being in whose sendings both the sending and the It which sends forth hold back with their self-manifestation”, alluding to *ἐποχή/epoché* as a matter of holding back. The *ἐποχή* is not a lack, but a necessity for the perceptibility of beings in general, as well as the beings that we ourselves are. We apprehend what they are, and *that* they are, because being only partially exposes itself through them.<sup>415</sup> Human worldliness entails an experience of a withdrawal of being in the midst of its revelation. It is this dynamic of simultaneous withdrawal and disclosure that forms human existence and historicity. Therefore, Heidegger writes in *Beiträge*, history is more than the willful actions of human beings.<sup>416</sup> Historical time gives or discloses the measure of being, as its allocation and retraction. What is given as a historical epoch, as a certain historical truth, must be grasped as a specific manifestation of this simultaneous nearness and remoteness of being in beings. What characterizes *our* epoch, the epoch of metaphysics, is that this comprehension of being is obscured *as such*; we are only able to perceive the various epochs, but not their ground in being.

But should being be thought as historical only, or does it have another dimensionality as well? “Is” being equal to its historicity, or does being maintain a certain independency from the latter, a form of unmoving absoluteness? In *Beiträge* and *GS*, Heidegger displays a clear tendency to historicize being altogether, arguing that historical sending constitutes the essence of being.<sup>417</sup> But in contrast to these works, *ZS* makes a pronounced effort to preserve a difference between being and its historicity.<sup>418</sup> As *Ruin* shows, it is also important to remember that Heidegger's whole project of thinking being and time together throughout remains a sharp critique of historicism, and that a concept such as the moment of vision is the span that mediates between eternity and temporality, as an enacted, finite comprehension of the eternal –

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<sup>414</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

<sup>415</sup> “sowohl das Schicken als auch das Es, das schickt, an sich halten mit der Bekundung ihrer selbst”, *Ibid.*, p. 13. [p. 9].

<sup>416</sup> *Beiträge*, pp. 32-33.

<sup>417</sup> *Beiträge*, p. 479; *GS*, p. 136.

<sup>418</sup> *ZS*, pp. 7-9.

that is, the non-historical.<sup>419</sup> In the same way, the notion of being as a sending breaks with the opposition between relativity and absoluteness.<sup>420</sup> Ruin writes that

Truth is historical, but not in the sense of something confined to a limited region in space and time, since such a quantitative limitation of a generality is precisely what characterizes historicism. What Heidegger is searching for, here and elsewhere, is something else: an articulation of the finitude of the generality itself, which should transcend the division of eternity and finitude. This too is the aspiration of the thought of *Ereignis*.<sup>421</sup>

How, then, can the human being according to Heidegger assume the mode of Da-sein, the mode which can respond to the sending of being? Heidegger's answer to this question would, if we follow his line, require a hermeneutical confrontation precisely with the circumstance that the giving of being has not been thought in its own right within the western tradition. Via a summary of some aspects of Heidegger's reading of Parmenides, I will show how "distress" (*Not*) is the term by which Heidegger characterizes the passage to an appropriation of being in the epoch of modernity.

#### **4. Parmenides and the beginning of occidental thought**

How exactly is the oblivion of being, as an oblivion of its giving character as well as its difference from beings, to be comprehended, and how and why is this something that impacts on the constitution of identity? How can metaphysics as a tradition of *thought* decide upon a certain *experience* of modernity? How are thought and the experience of the historical situation connected?

According to Heidegger, it is precisely in the loss of an understanding of this connectedness that the forgetfulness of being is to be found. We do no longer have a language for the insight into how thought, judgment and articulation in general entails a receptivity to being. For this reason, we have also lost the ability to understand that an epoch is something that is decided upon in this receptivity, as a decision which involves both us and the sending of being.<sup>422</sup>

Hence, the oblivion of being must be comprehended as the concealment of the ontological difference as such, the difference which also establishes a reciprocity of thought and being.

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<sup>419</sup> Ruin (1994), p. 199.

<sup>420</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 206-207.

<sup>421</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 245.

<sup>422</sup> See *GA* 10, pp. 139-141.

The occidental tradition, according to Heidegger, rests upon this difference, but the particular way in which it has unfolded itself corresponds to the extent to which being and its sending has been thought in their own right.<sup>423</sup>

Our tradition, he holds, begins with an ambiguity pertaining to the Greek term for being, "ὄν". Being both a noun and a participle, the term refers to something that is in being, as well as the "to be" in itself.<sup>424</sup> The term therefore introduces the problem of the ontological difference, unfolding and concealing it at the same time.<sup>425</sup>

My aim here is to show how Heidegger traces this ambiguity in Parmenides' "On nature", as it is this thinker that would remain Heidegger's original source of inspiration in his considerations of identity as Sameness. Following Heidegger's reading, the poem shows how the doubleness within being corresponds to two different comportments towards what-is.<sup>426</sup> It is the conflation of these two modes that according to him establishes the occidental historicity.

To the thinker of the poem, three paths are given to contemplate and possibly to tread. Of these, it is the path of unconcealment, of ἀλήθεια, that is decided upon, a possibility that for Heidegger only can be enacted together with a meditation on the path to non-being. The understanding of why this latter route is impossible for man to tread is a part of the decision on the first. But it is the contrast between the first and the *third* course that Heidegger finally emphasizes. As the route of δόξα, the third way on the surface resembles the first, but is in fact opposite to it.<sup>427</sup>

As δόξα, "the route of opinion", the human apprehension remains on the level of a direct perception of beings present, unable to perceive their *presencing*. Instead, it is aware of their ontical multiplicity, τὰ ὄντα. Δόξα is related to the notion of semblance, which according to Heidegger originally meant to designate how something appears in the light of being. In terms of φύσις, being is a shining forth, and that which stands in this shine suggests itself in terms of appearance (*Aussehen*, εἶδος, ἰδέα). What appears in this shine, Heidegger writes, becomes accessible in terms of *Ansicht*, which can be translated to sight, as well as to view and opinion in English. Something becomes approachable from different views, being a point of reference for a manifold of opinions. We uphold a multiplicity of views and suppositions in all our relationships to beings, for the most part assumed without a direct access to the unconcealment of the thing in question. Thereby, Heidegger argues, everything which appears necessarily risks

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<sup>423</sup> GA 7, p. 237.

<sup>424</sup> GA 5, p. 344.

<sup>425</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 364.

<sup>426</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 175-176.

<sup>427</sup> GA 40, pp. 119-120.

the concealment of its own truth. As a phenomenon that originates from the strife between concealment and unconcealment, semblance is not to be interpreted in terms of subjectivity. On the contrary, it constitutes a condition for history.<sup>428</sup> Semblance is in other words an inherent characteristic of the ontological difference as a twofold of being and beings, a twofold that structures not only the human perception, but the world of this being as well. Δόξα is a matter of perceiving what is in an *immediate* way, taking that which presents itself immediately to be equal to what truly is – to believe it to be unconcealed because of the mere fact that it offers itself as a being for us.<sup>429</sup>

Νοεῖν, on the other hand, clearing the path of ἀλήθεια, is the form of receptivity that perceives the very presencing (εἶναι) of what is present (ὄν). It is the perception of nonimmediate being. Hence, it is not to be understood as thinking in general or what we today understand as reason.<sup>430</sup> Rather, Heidegger interprets the terms of νοεῖν and νοῦς as “the minding that has something in mind and takes it to heart”.<sup>431</sup> As an *existential* route, νοεῖν entails an insight into how that which appears to be, only *is* to the extent that it is already given by being. It does not engender itself, cannot add something to being, but is only understandable as a variation of manifestations of the latter, unfolding within the borders of its wholeness. These manifestations do not bring about and maintain *themselves*, and in this respect, they *are* not. According to Parmenides, ἀλήθεια, as “the well-rounded Truth”, comprises the chain and the boundaries which keep beings together in an indivisible, resting whole.

Thus the heart of ἀλήθεια is only unconcealed to the one who undergoes a transformation in his or her perception, towards the mode of νοεῖν. A Sameness (το αὐτό/*Selbigkeit/das Selbe*), assembling thinking as νοεῖν and being is revealed. It is in this collision that being is first brought into the open, and νοεῖν becomes available *as* a perception of being. Therefore, this reciprocity is not a question of a theoretical determination of the true oneness, separating it as an entity standing opposed to beings which would be “nothing but semblance”. It is rather an enactment where the distinction between being and beings for the first time becomes visible and living. As Heidegger writes,

The ambiguity of the ὄν identifies what presences as well as the presencing. It identifies both at once but neither as such. To this essential ambiguity of the ὄν there corresponds the fact that the νοεῖν of the εἶναι,

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<sup>428</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 111-113.

<sup>429</sup> *GA 7*, pp. 258-259.

<sup>430</sup> *GA 5*, p. 176.

<sup>431</sup> “das Sinnen, das etwas im Sinn hat und sich zu Herzen nimmt”, *GA 8*, p. 210. English translation by J. G. Grey as *What is Called Thinking* (1968), here p. 207.

of the *έόν*, belongs together with the *δόξα* of the *δοκοῦντα*, i.e., of the *έόντα*. What the *voεῖν* perceives is not that which truly is in contrast to mere seeming. Rather, the *δόξα* perceives immediately that which itself presences, rather than the presencing of what presences, which presencing the *voεῖν* perceives.<sup>432</sup>

As Carol White argues, Heidegger thus holds that Parmenides, in contrast to Plato, does not keep *τα οντα*, beings, apart from their inherent, unified being.<sup>433</sup> In the Heideggerian interpretation of Parmenides, it is the shift between the perception of beings to the perception of their being as a matter of a *critical moment* that is the focal point, as the determination of the way in which beings will appear. Thus, for Heidegger, *voεῖν* as apprehension, is “no mere process”, but decision.<sup>434</sup> As White argues, *voεῖν* “is the Parmenidean equivalent of *Being and Time*’s moment of insight or, more exactly, of our special capacity as *Da-sein* which enables us to have this insight”.<sup>435</sup> Yet decision, White shows, is not a question of the judgment or will of the everyday-self, but exactly of the self in transformation towards resoluteness, causing a split in “being, unconcealment, appearance, and non-being”.<sup>436</sup> The choice of route is by Heidegger formulated as a question of a *separation* of the different paths (“diese drei Wege unterscheiden”) and of a response to them by way of a decision (“und sich entsprechend zu ihnen und gegen sie entscheiden”).<sup>437</sup>

In the essay “*Moirai*”, Heidegger holds that the riddle of the poem is sustained in the question of *how* thinking and being can belong to one another in this respect. Looking at fragment VIII of Parmenides text, Heidegger shows how *έόν* is the Greek word that captures the assembly of this Sameness. It denotes being as the twofold between beings and being, which comes to a resolution in the confrontation of being and *voεῖν*.<sup>438</sup> Neither on the basis of *έόντα*, “beings in themselves”, nor on the basis of *εἶναι* as “being in itself” is thinking, *voεῖν*, needed, but on the basis of the twofold which holds them together.<sup>439</sup>

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<sup>432</sup> “Die Zweideutigkeit des *όν* nennt sowohl das Anwesende als auch das Anwesen. Sie nennt beide zugleich und keines als solches. Dieser wesenhaften Zweideutigkeit des *όν* entspricht, daß mit der *δόξα* der *δοκοῦντα*, d. h. der *έόντα*, das *voεῖν* des *εἶναι*, des *έόν*, zusammengehört. Was das *voεῖν* vernimmt, ist nicht das wahrhaft Seiende im Unterschied zum bloßen Schein. Vielmehr vernimmt die *δόξα* das Anwesende selbst unmittelbar, aber nicht das Anwesen des Anwesenden, welches Anwesen das *voεῖν* vernimmt.”, *GA* 5, p. 176. Translation by J. Young and K. Haynes as “Hegel’s Concept of Experience”, *Off the Beaten Track* (2002), p. 135. To be followed throughout the study, hereafter referred to as *HCE*.

<sup>433</sup> Carol J. White, “Heidegger and the Greeks”, *A companion to Heidegger* (2005), p. 130.

<sup>434</sup> “kein bloßer Vorgang”, *GA* 40, p. 176.

<sup>435</sup> White (2005), p. 130.

<sup>436</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131. Reference to *GA* 40, p. 117: “Sein, Unverborgenheit, Schein und Nichtsein”.

<sup>437</sup> *GA* 40, p. 118. See also pp. 213-214.

<sup>438</sup> *GA* 7, p. 247.

<sup>439</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 257-258.

Taking the Greek goddess *Moirai* in regard, the goddess which binds being to something whole and immovable, Heidegger holds that she is the one providing (“versieht und beschenkt”) the twofold in an allotment of destiny as sending/*Geschick*.<sup>440</sup> It is thus in this text that the ontological difference obtains its being-historical dimension; history is the dynamic sending of this twofold.<sup>441</sup> But as already mentioned, it is a sending which keeps and preserves the twofold as such, in a still-point beyond time.

According to Heidegger, a belief must eventually arise that being is identical with the totality of beings in the sense of an *indifference*. On this route, being eventually comes to be grasped as the being which is *most* in being, the unified being which remains the same in a static respect.<sup>442</sup> The stillness of the unshaking heart is interpreted as a substance, as the stillness of *beings*, that excludes their inherent and incessant change. This indifference will permeate the notion of the Sameness of the unconcealment of being and *voẽiv* as well: Sameness is now converted into a comprehension of truth as a matter of representing knowledge. The truth of what is in being is thereby understood to be grounded in the judging activity of the mind. A mere identity would thus prevail between mind and being, in which they are merged as a conflation of two beings.

With this fusion, Heidegger claims, where the decisive difference of the twofold and thus the twofold as such falls into oblivion, metaphysics begins.<sup>443</sup> It is not primarily as a theoretical matter that the difference between being and beings is left out of consideration, but as the question of how the relation between them is established as a resolution and happening. As the ontological difference no longer takes place as an occurrence, being itself withdraws both from thought and from experience, withdraws *as* the experience of the reciprocity of thinking as *voẽiv* and being. Metaphysics is for Heidegger characterized by the fact that this twofold per se is hidden, that we cannot think and maintain ourselves within in it, instead remaining by the perception of ourselves and of things as ontically graspable beings only.

What is in being will for modern philosophy become comprehensible as objects, maintaining themselves for the sake of, and through, the immediate representing perception of the human being. With a reference to Berkeley specifically and thinking after Descartes generally, Heidegger holds that being becomes equal to thinking

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<sup>440</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 256.

<sup>441</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 257.

<sup>442</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 245-246.

<sup>443</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246.

insofar as the objectivity of objects is composed and constituted in the representing consciousness, in the “I think something.” In light of this assertion regarding the relation between being and thinking, the saying of Parmenides comes to be viewed as a crude prefiguring of contemporary doctrines of reality and the knowledge of reality.<sup>444</sup>

For Heidegger, this is where Hegel's thinking obtains its terrain. As will be further explicated in the next chapter, the question of being, according to Heidegger, will for Hegel become a question of self-engendered thinking, in an appropriation of the philosophies of Kant and Descartes.<sup>445</sup>

When being remains unthought, we are, as it were, destined to encounter only ourselves.<sup>446</sup> But viewed more accurately, it is in reality *not* ourselves that we hereby encounter, precisely as we no longer grasp ourselves out of the twofold of being. Moreover, the obscuring of the human openness to being corresponds to an objectification of the numinous, noncontingent dimension of being. Metaphysics in general would for Heidegger be the outcome of the human strive to conceptualize and ultimately hypostatize an original experience of a giving and receiving for which there is no final axiomatic name.

On Heidegger's reading, it is not possible to conceive of this as a mistake on the part of thinking, as such a conclusion merely would confirm the certitude of the subjective powers of man. Rather, this development belongs to being itself, or more precisely its unfolding for the human mind. Our specific epochal sending, the epoch of modernity, is marked by the insensibility to the sending as an original phenomenon. For Heidegger, phenomena such as nihilism, *Gestell* and *Machenschaft*,<sup>447</sup> are all manifestations of the completion of the concealment of the ontological difference of being: they are constellations in which an intensified refusal of being is maintained. A closer account of *Machenschaft* will follow in the next chapter.

It is against this background that Heidegger's words about an “other beginning” are to be grasped. The other beginning would be a return to this original experience of being which prepares our own epoch, including the oblivion during its end.<sup>448</sup> However, I bring this up not as a separate theme on which I will concentrate, but as part of the attempt to stake out why

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<sup>444</sup> “insofern sich die Gegenständigkeit der Gegenstände im vorstellenden Bewußtsein, im ‘ich denke etwas’ zusammenstellt, konstituiert. Im Lichte dieser Aussage über die Beziehung von Denken und Sein nimmt sich der Spruch des Parmenides wie eine ungeschlachte Vorform der neuzeitlichen Lehre von der Wirklichkeit und ihrer Erkenntnis aus.“, *Ibid.*, p. 240. Translation by D. F. Krell and F. Capuzzi as “Moira“, Martin Heidegger, *Early Greek Thinking* (1975), p. 82.

<sup>445</sup> *GA* 7, p. 241.

<sup>446</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

<sup>447</sup> See *Beiträge*, p. 119.

<sup>448</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 359.

and in what respect being's historicity as metaphysics according to Heidegger is a component of our identity today. For a Heidegger which thinks from out of the turn, history's importance is not to be found in the one or the other historical constellation which "constructs" our identity in an arbitrary way, but as that specific sending of being that carries and determines these constellations, and the mode in which we approach something like identity to begin with.

In the epoch of modernity, we are according to this argument (o)pressed by the *distress* of the withdrawal of being in its twofold. The oblivion of being is thus an essential part of our contemporary identity, not as a factor added to a prior, subjective identity, but *in terms of a forgetting of the very original happening and ground of identity as Sameness*, of that which exposes the human being to being, and thus lets its own being to become manifest.

If history is understood on the basis of being, and our own historicity as the epoch of metaphysics, then the next step would be to consider what our own being-historical situation entails more precisely. What would a turn into the truth of being imply, if its disclosure in our time is understood as a sending of the distress of concealment? How can we make this collective destiny "our own"? What should already be clear is that it is no question of a mere theoretical insight into "the fact that being has always sent itself", for such a thought would merely confirm the conceptualizing mode of metaphysics, maintaining a representation of being, rather than the readiness to stand in its giving. Instead, it is a question of how to turn into its truth as such, learning to receive it in a more primordial manner, and ultimately to think *one-self* out of this receptive mode. We must turn into the distress as the ontological experience of our historicity.

## 5. On distress and distresslessness

It is above all in *Beiträge* that Heidegger develops the argument that within a historical situation denoted by the withdrawal of being, the transformation of our existence into Da-sein must begin with our acknowledgement of the emptiness of this withdrawal, given as an experience of distress.<sup>449</sup> It is necessary to follow Heidegger's logic carefully here, in order to avoid the conclusion that this entails a simple confirmation of the privation of being. The dialectic is similar to that of Hegel's negation of the negation of consciousness.

Following this logic, we cannot separate the sending of being as oblivion from our ignorance of this sending. In the refusal to recognize the withdrawal, in the temptation to cover it, we also refuse a privileged and direct experience of the premise for our historical being. It is a

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<sup>449</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 12.

question about the fact that we decline the acknowledgment of this distress, the *call* which emerges from it, to evoke a term from *SZ*. The distress is therefore sustained as the most severe of distresses, namely as a “distresslessness”, or lack of distress (*Notlosigkeit*).<sup>450</sup> The loss of being announces itself as a distress, but exactly because of the character of the present epoch, it is only heard in a distorted form. The appropriation of the distress is rejected. But as our historical existence always is a question of a way of *being*, this rejection of the distress in fact constitutes a specific comportment to being, manifested exactly in its refusal to arrive.

It is not by coincidence, then, that a doubleness prevails in Heidegger’s use of the term of distress: on the one hand, it is a distress on the part of being. On the other hand, it is a distress on the part of man, as his own facticity. Its root is therefore not to be found in the private existence of man, but in being’s tendency to withdraw itself. Yet distress is by no means something historical in the sense of a temporary characteristic created by an epoch. The historically specific distress spoken of here arises in response to the refusal to accept the *Nothing* (*das Nichts*) as a necessary side of being, or more precisely the primordial distress arising from the existential encounter with this Nothing. This is discussed by Heidegger in his “What is Metaphysics?” from 1929, a text which is often regarded as one that marks the transition from his early to his late thinking. In a continuation of *SZ*, the Nothing is here discussed in a more developed manner, interrogated as a theme on its own. Here, anxiety is still understood as that which reveals it. But from the perspective of later Heidegger, distress would be a more appropriate and broad way to characterize the mode of the disclosure of the Nothing in *Dasein*. Yet, by using the word anxiety, Heidegger reveals an important connection between the Nothing and being-towards-death. Insofar as we are finite, our access to being remains conditioned by the nearness to our forthcoming death, by the possibility of non-being, shouldered as the suffering of anxiety in life. Nothing, as the other side of being, reveals itself to us in the anticipation of the unavoidable possibility of no longer being existent, in the recognition and bearing of our individualized finitude.<sup>451</sup> When the Nothing is rejected, meaning that finitude is ignored, Nothing announces itself as the distress of the rejected Nothing. This is at least one interpretation that could be made, binding together the early and late Heidegger on this subject. The experience of being in terms of Nothing, is the condition for experiencing being’s explicit appearance; when taking a step back from being, meaning that we no longer can experience it as our possession, it will announce itself as something more than *a* being.

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<sup>450</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>451</sup> “Was ist Metaphysik?”, *GA* 9, pp. 112-115.

Solely when sighted from the perspective of death, can it become tangible as a thing without ontical thinghood. In turning away from this condition, our epoch upholds an ignorance of the *weight* of being, the resistance which gives it an ontological, and not merely theoretical solidity. Without the avowal of this density of being, it will be envisaged as a mere representation, something beyond any existential manifestness: a being of generality, universality and familiarity.<sup>452</sup>

The turn *from* this distress of distresslessness of modernity, as a turn *into* the manifestation of the truth of being, can therefore only take place as an explicit exposure to the resistance inherent in being, perceptible as an obstruction within our own historical, phenomenological and corporeal existence. We must learn that that which we regard as our own being, in reality is not owned by us. Not merely the given historical and personal identity must here recede, as we are unsettled in respect to our particular spatiotemporal situation, but the whole question of who we are ontologically is displaced as well. Both features of identity uncovered in *SZ*, the historical and the phenomenological, are in other words shattered in this late account of being and Da-sein. Being should in other words no longer be understood as something which simply confirms us as authentic, but rather as that which brings about the overcoming of a self-confirming subjectivity. It is this emphasis on a recognition of being in its burdening and self-challenging character, its initial appearance as a frightful and empty Nothingness, that will serve as the background to Heidegger's account of the ontological difference and belonging-together.

How this dynamic between being and the Da-sein of the human being departs from the metaphysical dichotomy of subjectivity and objectivity remains to be explained more closely. The question must be fully addressed before we can stake out the whole account of how identity is to be thought for Heidegger, and how it can serve as a response to the Butlerian query.

The next chapter presents Heidegger's encounter with Hegel, showing how Heidegger's full understanding of identity arises from a confrontation with subject metaphysics generally and Hegelian thinking specifically. It is Hegel's metaphysics that addresses the problem of identity in a way that would deeply influence Heidegger's engagement with it. This confrontation simultaneously gives us the hermeneutical chance to reach a more careful understanding of the occidental metaphysical tradition. The aim is to show that it is within the metaphysical paradigm that history and being can appear as identity-constituting by way of power.

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<sup>452</sup> *Beiträge*, p. 116; *SZ*, pp. 3-4.

## Chapter Six. Heidegger, Hegel and the Butlerian problem of identity

### 1. Point of departure: Hölderlin and the historicity of the subject-object paradigm

Heidegger's appropriation and critique of Hegel's philosophy is a significant passage on the way to an understanding of his reconsideration of subject metaphysics, as well as how this reconsideration affects those themes and notions that are substantial for an account of identity in his thinking. It is the background against which Heidegger's *IuD* can be properly understood.

The readings of Hegel revolve around several themes, and develop parallel to Heidegger's philosophy as a whole. Denise Souche-Dagues has mapped out three stages in this encounter: 1) The critique of the "Hegelian theory of time" in the 1925-26 Marburg lectures and in § 82 of *Being and Time*; 2) *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* (1930/31) and "Hegel's Concept of Experience" (1942/43), and 3) The 1957 lectures/texts collected in *GA 11*. According to her, the first period is characterized by a rejection of the Hegelian metaphysical thought, the second by the aim to incorporate Hegel into the own thinking, and the third by a "more complicated" "setting at a distance which wants to be an appropriation".<sup>453</sup> Sinnerbrink expands these divisions with the following traits:

1) a critical rejection of Hegel from the standpoint of fundamental ontology and the Destruktion of the history of ontology; 2) a dialogical confrontation with Hegel from the perspective of the project of 'overcoming metaphysics'; and 3) an 'enveloping' appropriation of Hegel through the non-metaphysical thought of *Er-eignis*, the 'step back' behind metaphysics which discloses its unthought element.<sup>454</sup>

My interpretation will be centered around the second and the third period of this scheme (additionally including volume 68 of the *GA*), but unfold thematically rather than chronologically. The purpose is to illuminate those critical aspects relevant for the theme of identity and difference only, rather than the complete question of metaphysics.

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<sup>453</sup> Denise Souche-Dagues, "The Dialogue between Hegel and Heidegger", *Martin Heidegger: Critical Assessments. Vol. II: History of Philosophy* (1992), pp. 246-247. The texts "Die Negativität. Eine Auseinandersetzung mit Hegel aus dem Ansatz in der Negativität" (1938/39, 1941) and "Erläuterung der 'Einleitung' zu Hegels 'Phänomenologie des Geistes'" (1942) were first published 1993 as volume 68 of the *Gesamtausgabe*, and are therefore not considered by Souche-Dagues. For the same reason, the lecture series *Der deutsche Idealismus*, held in 1929 and first published as *GA 28* in 1997 is also excluded. But neither is "Hegel und die Griechen" from 1958, published in *GA 9* 1976, accounted for within this scheme.

<sup>454</sup> Sinnerbrink (2001), p. 181.

To stake out an analysis of the part of Heidegger's critique that is at issue here, I propose another consideration of the Hölderlinian fragment on identity and being. Whether Heidegger had access to the text in question is unclear, but a knowledge of this is not necessary for a use of the fragment as a starting point.

Similar to Hölderlin and Hegel, Heidegger views the problem of identity as interwoven with the question of being, and problematizes human self-awareness within the strive for both being and identity. For Heidegger, too, it constitutes an inherent and essential trait of the self to assume that its inherent negativity can be overcome on the basis of a self-positing, a positing mediated through the relationship to external beings or objectivity. Viewed through Heidegger's terminology of the analytic of Dasein, this corresponds to Dasein's everyday mode of being. At the same time, viewed from the perspective of many other and later works, this constitutes the comportment towards the world and its beings that is characteristic of metaphysics. For Heidegger, being is not something that can be achieved by self-consciousness in its positing of objectivity or in its mediations between the subjective and objective aspects of reality. For Hegel however, the case is partly another: insofar as self-consciousness can negate itself in its negation, turn its negative power against itself, it is the locus of absolute spirit, unifying subject and object.

Following Heidegger, this is not merely a question of the phenomenology of the subject, object and self-consciousness, as this phenomenology must be regarded from a being-historical perspective as well.<sup>455</sup> Not only is this problem of the constituting negativity within identity being-historically determined, but the understanding of the human being and its world in terms of subjectivity on the one hand and objectivity on the other belongs to a paradigm that brings forth this negativity as a being-historical concern.

At this point, it is important to acknowledge a difference between Heidegger's early and late accounts of the problem of subject metaphysics. Until the reorientation in Heidegger's thinking from the late 30's onward, the subject is treated as a misconception of Dasein. Thereafter, it is defined as the very essence of modern humanity. As Michael Inwood concisely puts it, for later Heidegger, "modern man is not simply mistakenly regarded as a/the subject. He is a subject, and to that extent he is not Da-sein".<sup>456</sup> *SZ* and *GA* 24, for instance, problematize

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<sup>455</sup> It is worth remembering that Heidegger's notion of the history of being partially unfolds as a response to Hegel's comprehension of history; see Ruin (1994), pp. 262-265. On an account of philosophy and history in the context of both Hegel's and Kierkegaard's influence on Heidegger, see Günter Figal, *Heidegger zur Einführung* (1999), pp. 11-22. A complete account of this relation between Hegel and Heidegger on the topic of historicity remains however outside of my specific choice of theme.

<sup>456</sup> Michel Inwood, *A Heidegger Dictionary* (1999), p. 203.

the subject as a characterization that cannot account for the openness to being as a central feature of the human being, a conception unable to encompass the whole dimensionality of this being. The roots of this dichotomy between subject and object are in the major work explained not only historically, as an outcome of Cartesian thinking, but from a phenomenological, Dasein-analytical perspective. According to the latter view, they can be derived from the fact that the human being is dispersed in the world and its various entities, and understands itself on the basis of this dispersion. It is told to be in the theorizing attitude towards this relation that Dasein comes to understand it in terms of a subject-object-relationship. The dichotomy is settled in Dasein's continuous attempt to come to terms with the fundamental void that structures all worldly existence, experienced in terms of a “not yet” from the temporal perspective.

Later, for instance as expressed at a seminar held in Le Thor in 1968, the perspective has altered. Here, Heidegger traces the root of this diremption (*Entzweiung*) between subject and object to the being-historical transformation of the human being into a subject. The dichotomy as such has its domain in the “dimension of subjectivity”, a dimension which occurs with the first meditation of Descartes and his search for a foundation of absolute knowledge. In this occurrence, the judging and thinking human mind first *becomes* subiectum/ὑποκείμενον, in the sense that it now reflects itself as the foundation of beings in their being. There are, Heidegger argues, only objects insofar as there are subjects measuring and representing the truth, the objectivity of these objects. In Hegel, Heidegger argues, this “sphere of subjectivity” is denoted by the term *Bewusstsein*.<sup>457</sup> By contrast, the ancient Greek world cannot be viewed in terms of a diremption of this kind.<sup>458</sup> Following Heidegger's argument, this split would be brought forward as a particular sending of being, a sending in which being, post Descartes, is grasped as “absolute subject”, as “will to power” and finally as power plain and simple.

For this reason, the subject-object diremption can in Heidegger's view neither be regarded as false, nor as an arbitrary, temporal misconception. But neither can it be ascribed to an eternal mode of everydayness. Rather, it could be regarded as the over-dimensioned predominance of a fundamental manner of being in the world, where the world is grasped and experienced as a sum of beings, interacting through causal relationships – as a summary of their diversity, of τὰ ὄντα.

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<sup>457</sup> *Seminare*, GA 15, pp. 292-293. Quotations on p. 293; “Dimension der Subjektivität”; “Sphäre der Subjektivität”.

<sup>458</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 329.

On the basis of this localization of the problem, Heidegger addresses a radicality of thought different from Hegel's. For Heidegger, the encounter with the fundamental negativity in being cannot be represented as a self-bending, a self-inversion *within* this paradigm of subject metaphysics or within subjectivity. The paradigm as such must be completely reversed; it must be suffered as a being-historical distress. In *Beiträge* Heidegger expresses this in a somewhat dramatic manner, holding that a choice (*Entscheidung*) must be made as to “whether man wants to remain a ‘subject’, or whether he founds Da-sein”.<sup>459</sup>

It is this awareness of the temporality of metaphysics that Heidegger considers to be lacking in Hegel and his reversal of the same epoch of thought. What is absent is the problematization of the reference to the human consciousness as ὑποκείμενον, and thus as the inaugurator and utter reference point of identity.

Of course, this is not a question of mere terminology, but of how we are to think the fundamentality of the negativity encountered in the strive for identity. For Heidegger, the crucial question is whether Hegel can regard it as a question of the ontological difference or not. It is this difference that according to Heidegger corresponds to the original insight that the human cannot generate being, but that being on the other hand is what can allow an experience of unity or identity for this being.

It is against this background that Heidegger traces an ambiguity in Hegel's writings. Being, for Hegel, insofar as it announces itself as a bent negativity, is something which shatters self-consciousness, rather than sustains it – and yet, in this transformation, self-consciousness, resurrected as spirit, can be thought of as “absolute”. This ambiguity will be the focus of the following reading.

## **2. Hegelian experience: self-confirmation and self-distortion**

In “The Principle of Identity”, Heidegger acknowledges his indebtedness to Hegel specifically and speculative idealism generally. Without a doubt, it is Hegel primarily that provides Heidegger with the phenomenological foundation for a reconsideration of the logic-metaphysical understanding of identity. Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, Heidegger confirms, managed to recognize the act of synthesis that is involved in identity, and thus to demonstrate that identity only can be insofar as it involves its own mediation.<sup>460</sup>

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<sup>459</sup> ”ob der Mensch ‘Subjekt’ bleiben will oder ob er das Da-sein gründet”, *Beiträge*, p. 90. [*Contributions*, p. 62].

<sup>460</sup> *IuD*, p. 34.

At the seminar in Le Thor, Heidegger discusses how the need for unity on the part of the human being is a consequence of the impossibility of immediate wholeness in this being. If unity was eternally and immediately prevailing, existence would certainly be the dark night in Schelling's thought.<sup>461</sup> Interpreting Hegel's metaphor that "a torn sock is better than a mended one", Heidegger holds that it is only when the sock is torn apart, *zerrissen*, that we can explicitly begin to perceive it *as* a sock. What is now openly lacking in the sock is unity. However, this means that unity is precisely what the diremption brings forth, *as* a loss. Natural unity must be sacrificed, as it is only in the destruction of it, from the wound, that a *living* unity arises. When turning away from the unity sustained by judgment, unity can be reestablished in an authentic manner.<sup>462</sup> On the basis of this, Heidegger remarks on the difference between this resurrection of wholeness as *Vereinigung*, and as unification in terms of *Einigung/Einswerden*. The word *Vereinigung* brings out the mediation between opposites, as the unifying power that brings together the ostensibly separated. What is sublated here, is the independency of each part, as independency is what distinguishes division.<sup>463</sup>

There are various indications that Heidegger recognizes this important insight in Hegel already in the second period of his conversation with him. Those indications will be explicated further below. But the critical question throughout this engagement would remain whether Hegel could finally think and articulate this thought within the framework of metaphysics. Did the framework allow him to dismantle identity for the sake of the hidden midpoint of all identity enactment, namely being?

According to Heidegger, being in Hegel's philosophy is presented as the self-realization of consciousness, expressed through the term experience. Experience is the presencing of consciousness, its coming to presence for itself as absolute spirit. As absolute spirit, it is there as something other than it were in its immediate state of being. Hence, experience here is no longer a word for knowledge as an activity exerted by the action of consciousness, but a term signifying the return into the absolute unity which natural consciousness tears apart. The term *Sein* must be comprehended in its intrinsic connection to the word *Bewusstsein* (consciousness): "Experience says what the 'being-' in 'being-conscious,' in consciousness, means; in

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<sup>461</sup> GA 15, p. 295.

<sup>462</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 288-289.

<sup>463</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 289-290.

fact, only on the basis of this ‘being-‘ does it become clear and binding what remains to be thought in the word ‘-conscious’ ”.<sup>464</sup>

In this respect, experience is the experience of a destruction of consciousness, but one that takes place within consciousness itself, in terms of its expansion. Viewed in this way, the experience of consciousness is consciousness’ experience and hence knowledge of being the locus of self-negation and self-distortion. Thinkable in terms of the fulfilment of consciousness, being is at the same time that which opposes it.

The meaning of this doubleness can be accurately understood only if it is not abstracted. In fact, it is the most concrete and embodied of experiences: its essence, Heidegger argues, consists in the pain (*Schmerz*) which consciousness hereby suffers:

The wealth of experience is determined by the strength to suffer. [9.] At one with this moment of “going through,” the experience is “painful.” The pain of the experience is not a consequence of it as a kind of impact on our corporeal-psychic state. The pain is rather the innermost essence of the experience in which all previously mentioned moments have their unity and determinateness.<sup>465</sup> (Brackets in original.)

For Heidegger, the concept of *Schmerz*, together with the terms *Zerrissenheit* (rift), *Leiden* (suffering) and *Ertragen* (enduring) bring out the respect in which being from the human perspective is governed by negativity.<sup>466</sup> They all elucidate the impact of the experience of the *difference* (*Unterschied*) in which consciousness stands: as consciousness of this negativity, of the being-other (*Anderssein*), Heidegger argues, consciousness suffers an ontological agony. Conversely, the opposite meaning could be extracted from this argumentation, namely that all existential suffering ultimately has an ontological meaning, as pointing towards an enacted confrontation with the negation within being.<sup>467</sup> In the suffering of its own ontology, when recognizing it as characteristic of its way of being, consciousness ultimately discovers itself in the other – however, in this case, not the other subject, nor the object, but being as such, as the

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<sup>464</sup> ”Erfahrung sagt, was im Wort Bewußt-sein das ‘-sein’ bedeutet, so zwar, daß erst aus diesem ‘-sein’ deutlich und verbindlich wird, was im Wort ‘Bewußt-‘ zu denken bleibt.“, *GA* 5, p. 166. [*HCE*, p. 135].

<sup>465</sup> “Der Reichtum der Erfahrung bestimmt sich aus der Kraft zum Leiden. [9.] In eins mit diesem Moment des ‘Durchmachens’ der Erfahrungen ist die Erfahrung ‘schmerzlich’. Der Schmerz der Erfahrung ist nicht eine Folge ihrer selbst nach der Art einer Auswirkung auf unseren leiblich-seelischen Zustand. Der Schmerz ist vielmehr das innerste Wesen der Erfahrung, in dem alle vorgenannten Momente ihre Einheit und Bestimmtheit haben.“, *GA* 68, p. 134. I will follow J. Arel’s and N. Feuerhahn’s translation of this work as *Hegel* (2015), here p. 102.

<sup>466</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 134-135. The translation of *Zerrissenheit* as “rift” is mine; Feuerhahn and Arel use the word “tearing”. [pp. 102-103].

<sup>467</sup> *Ibid.* [p. 102].

ultimate other. The being-other vis-à-vis being appears as a difference within oneself as consciousness, a difference that must be suffered as a profound pain.

The figure of the Unhappy Consciousness is therefore stressed by Heidegger as well. According to him, it embodies the point where this difference is acknowledged by consciousness, but not yet conquered. The following surmount of its unhappiness is not the repudiation, but the *mastering* of it, opening for the “belonging-together of the divided in one”.<sup>468</sup> An overcoming of the pain of consciousness, a “redemption from the rift” can thereby take place as an *Absolvenz*, a concept for which there is no given English translation, but which could be understood in terms of a “termination”, in this case of absolute spirit.<sup>469</sup>

This essential trait of experience partly explains the phenomenological reason for Hegel’s application of the subject-object-framework to absolute spirit. Because spirit is that movement in which an opposition is given to consciousness, the experience of it entails a dimension of “objectness” (*Gegenständlichkeit*), a sense of inner, almost spatial opposition.<sup>470</sup> As that which gives consciousness something to encounter, it constitutes a resistance for it.

On Heidegger’s reading, I would argue, Hegel’s account leads up to an equivocalness, the implications of which reaches into the present-day situation. Being is on the one hand the self-appearance of absolute spirit in consciousness. In this respect, Heidegger argues in *GA 15*, the absolute is the most complete identity, the ground of all kinds of oppositions, and thus a unity which consciousness finally returns to. It is not consciousness that reflects the absolute, but the absolute that reflects itself in consciousness. Consciousness becomes the mirror of the “A” of the law of identity, understood in terms of the absolute, as the mirror in which this absolute reflects itself through a self-generated light, in order to bring itself into unification. For Heidegger, it is this mirroring that explains the activity of reason as something speculative.<sup>471</sup>

Viewed from the opposite perspective, however, the conception of *Absolvenz* as the self-enactment on the part of consciousness points towards another meaning of absolute spirit, in which being no longer is allowed to appear in its otherness. How then, is the function and place of consciousness in this inversion of its negation to be comprehended?

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<sup>468</sup> ”Zusammengehörigkeit der Entzweiten in Einem”, *GA 32*, p. 108.

<sup>469</sup> ”Erlösung aus der Zerrissenheit”, *Ibid.*, p. 107.

<sup>470</sup> *GA 68*, p. 144. [*Hegel*, p. 109].

<sup>471</sup> *GA 15*, p. 319.

### 3. On consciousness, negativity and Nothing

In his text on the Hegelian concept of experience, Heidegger stresses how the Hegelian consciousness is both a separating faculty that distinguishes beings, and the site of a strive towards being as something that unites these beings. In Heideggerian terms, this implies that consciousness is ontical as well as ontological, a doubleness located in one and the same mind. Consciousness itself is the venue for this difference.<sup>472</sup> It is negativity in so far as it is the awareness of distinct objects, including itself, but it is also the potential of a perception and knowledge of unified being.

As Hegel himself demonstrated, the passage to the latter form of awareness can be enacted in a sacrifice of the natural, ontical, and differentiating consciousness – of its engagement with beings, as well as with itself. It is from out of this liberation that absolute knowledge arises.<sup>473</sup> Yet the enigmatic and unsettled matter here, Heidegger argues, is the origin of this sacrifice, of the rift. From one point of view, “Violence is the prevailing of restlessness in consciousness itself”, and from another “This prevailing is the will of the absolute that wants to be in its absoluteness in and for itself among us, with us, we who reside constantly in the mode of natural consciousness in the midst of beings.”<sup>474</sup> In other words, the power of this type of death, its destructive-creative force, somehow originates from consciousness itself, yet at the same time it is the reigning of the freedom of absolute spirit. Insofar as consciousness negates itself, the origin of this negative power becomes a living question. For it is here that consciousness discovers that it is subjected to something more encompassing than its own faculties. In the face of the absolute, consciousness is unsecured as a basis.

Nevertheless, this self-deprivation is for Hegel also an occurrence *within* the realm of consciousness, ultimately *expanding* its borders. It is in the light of this that the essence of consciousness is referred to as unconditional knowledge.<sup>475</sup> As this knowledge, consciousness is the site (*Stätte*) of the appearance (*Erscheinung*) of the absolute.<sup>476</sup>

At the same time, it can be this site due to the experience and insight that absolute knowledge is no medium or tool of consciousness, but something all along provided by the absolute itself. The absolute brings *itself* to appearance, and knowledge is accordingly to be understood on the basis of a reception of this absoluteness, as a perception receiving a

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<sup>472</sup> GA 5, p. 163. Cf. Sinnerbrink (2002), pp. 212-213 and GA 15, pp. 302-303.

<sup>473</sup> GA 32, pp. 22-23.

<sup>474</sup> ”Die Gewalt ist das Walten der Unruhe im Bewußtsein selbst.”; ”Dieses Walten ist der Wille des Absoluten, das in seiner Absolutheit an und für sich bei uns sein will, bei uns, die wir ständig in der Weise des natürlichen Bewußt-seins inmitten des Seienden uns aufhalten.”, GA 5, p. 161. [HCE, p. 121].

<sup>475</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>476</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 161-162. [p. 121].

grant.<sup>477</sup> It is in this respect that consciousness is differentiated from itself, as “already” being something which it is not yet.<sup>478</sup> In its self-distorting position, consciousness finds itself being a measure as well as the measured one.<sup>479</sup>

But is this dialectic not more than similar to Heidegger's account of Da-sein and being? From the perspective employed hitherto, it is clear that Hegel's account of unity and identity is an acknowledgement of the tension of a difference of an ontological kind, unfolding within consciousness. But the question is to what degree he brings out the philosophical implications of this differing, as both a loss of ground, a self-loss and the deepest acknowledgement of the limitedness of the own, particular life.

In GA 68, Heidegger holds that the framework for a confrontation with Hegel cannot be given as a higher standpoint of the consciousness of spirit. The point of departure must rather be a premise that is hidden within this thinking, without being acknowledged by Hegel himself. For Heidegger, the grounding determination of Hegel's philosophy, leading back to a more original standpoint on the basis of which its premise itself can be properly grasped, is negativity.<sup>480</sup> Although large parts of this piece are written in the highly fragmented and cryptic style that Heidegger often employed during this period, this text is perhaps the most central one for a profound apprehension of Heidegger's objection to Hegel.

The starting point of the text is precisely the insight that consciousness as such is the negative “fold” in being, a negativity performed by judgment in the broad sense. A reversal of this constitution demands that this negativity is drawn back into consciousness. Consciousness must learn to abide in the power of negativity as in a “trembling” (*Erzitterung*) or “shaking” (*Erdbeben*), rather than exerting it. Here, Heidegger paraphrases Hegel's own words: “the *tarrying* of spirit *with the negative* (not the looking away) turns that which is null and naught into ‘being’ ”.<sup>481</sup>

Heidegger's focus here is on the *origin* of this negation of the negation, the domain of the “no” of consciousness' break with its constituting negativity. Is it consciousness that enables itself to turn its negative power towards itself, or does the force of negation in fact precede consciousness, ground *it*, thus endowing it with the *possibility* to suspend its constituting neg-

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<sup>477</sup> GA 68, pp. 83, 98-99.

<sup>478</sup> GA 5, pp. 167-168.

<sup>479</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 169-170.

<sup>480</sup> GA 68, pp. 6, 14-29.

<sup>481</sup> “Das *Verweilen* des Geistes *beim Negativen* (nicht das Wegsehen) kehrt das Nichtige in das 'Sein' um.”, *Ibid.*, p. 28. [*Hegel*, p. 21]. Cf. *PhG*, p. 36. [*PS*, ¶ 32, p. 19].

ativity with a “no”?<sup>482</sup> Negativity is characterized as the difference “of” consciousness,<sup>483</sup> but it is, for Heidegger, not clear whether this difference according to Hegel springs from consciousness itself, or if consciousness, as a subject-object-division, reversely is claimed by it.<sup>484</sup>

In what respect is this question of importance? An argument that remains firm throughout Heidegger’s works, is the argument that the life of consciousness or the human being is constituted by a distance to being, established in the former’s engagements with the world and with itself. Rather than relating itself immediately to being, it is given over to beings. But this everyday remoteness from being is for Heidegger not only passive, but also rooted in a continuous *rejection* of the experience of the Nothing in terms of the anticipation of death. Accordingly, a negation of the negation of consciousness would mean to let the refusal of the Nothing fall away, in order to let oneself to be claimed by the Nothing. In its shadow, in the face of the possibility of death, being can become manifest.

Following Heidegger’s argument, due to an unclear merging of the Nothing and the negation in Hegel’s thinking, it is not obvious whether he manages to think this ontology of negativity. Within Hegel’s account, Heidegger claims, Nothing is rather *abstracted from* the “no“, abstracted from the activity of negation in judgment. In other words, judgment or self-consciousness is thought to possess the power to negate itself merely on the basis of itself.<sup>485</sup> But regarded in this way, as something which consciousness possesses, the Nothing will not announce itself as a manifestation of *being*, as it is not recognized in terms of something that reigns over consciousness.

Heidegger’s argument on this point is again more articulate in “What is Metaphysics?”, where it was claimed that it is only because the Nothing is revealed as the ground of Dasein, that the being of beings can be explicitly apparent. More precisely, it is in Dasein’s resoluteness to hold itself in the Nothing, that beings can be illuminated in their being for Dasein.<sup>486</sup> Dasein *is* “being held out into the nothing“, and therefore this constitutes its selfhood: “Without the original manifestness of the nothing, no selfhood and no freedom.”<sup>487</sup> The Nothing is neither an object, nor a being: it is the condition for approaching beings in their being. The Nothing, Heidegger continues, is not there “next to” beings, nor “for itself“, but is rather the

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<sup>482</sup> GA 68., p. 29.

<sup>483</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37.

<sup>484</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

<sup>485</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>486</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 120.

<sup>487</sup> “Hineingehaltenheit in das Nichts“; “Ohne ursprüngliche Offenbarkeit des Nichts kein Selbstsein und keine Freiheit.“, GA 9, p. 115. English translation by D. F. Krell in *Pathmarks* (1998), p. 91.

enabling of the openness in which these beings are encountered.<sup>488</sup> For Heidegger, this is what demonstrates that Nothing *does not arise through negation*, but that all negation becomes possible on the basis of the self-emergence of the Nothing, as what from the beginning manifests being.<sup>489</sup> A negation of the negation of human consciousness means letting that which the human otherwise holds back and thus continuously escapes, escapes through negating it, to emerge fully.

In the kind of executed anxiety that arises here, Heidegger writes, that voice of Dasein, through which it maintains its everyday statements of the being of something, of the “is” of something, begins to subside.<sup>490</sup> In exposing itself to the Nothing, the self-assuredness of Dasein’s judgment, the structure of self-consciousness itself eventually collapses. In this experience, being can no longer be maintained as something produced by the I through the activity of the mind. Abiding in the Nothing, the I experiences that being is something that *governs it*, something that allows it to distinguish itself as a distinct being among others in a worldly life. The Nothing reveals that being is not a concept for the most general matter thinkable, exactly as it first lets being to withdraw, *in terms of* the most general, as a matter of indifference. It is the falling away of this indifference that for Heidegger represents the manifestation of the ontological difference – the strange experience that being is something other than beings, yet shines through them, for the being that Dasein is.

Hegel’s neglect of this question of the origin of negativity, Heidegger contends, is displayed in the fact that he neglects to thematize the difference between being and Nothing.<sup>491</sup> It is not unfolded as a critical transition, a transition of crisis, a *καταστροφή*, neither in being, nor in consciousness<sup>492</sup> – the shifts between them occur *within* the system itself, not as something which challenges it.<sup>493</sup> Ultimately, the sameness of being and Nothing is contended by Heidegger as well, yet never in the immediate sense that is the case for Hegel according to this interpretation.<sup>494</sup>

If the difference between being and Nothing remains disregarded, Heidegger argues, the ontological difference will be obscured as well. Being is only given in the exposure to Nothing – but the Nothing, in turn, is disclosed only for the human being that can acknowledge death in life, its human finitude, and thus a radical shortcoming and otherness in relation to

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<sup>488</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>489</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 116-117.

<sup>490</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 112.

<sup>491</sup> *GA* 68, pp. 13-14. See also pp. 21-23, 26-27.

<sup>492</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.

<sup>493</sup> *IuD*, pp. 61-62.

<sup>494</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 47.

absolute being. Death and finitude remain the horizon of being. Hence, death is not only something that pertains to the human being as one characteristic among others, but defines its privileged place in timespace: "Only man 'has' the distinction of standing before death, because man inhabits in be-ing: Death is the utmost testimonial for be-ing."<sup>495</sup> According to Heidegger, Hegel does not fully recognize consciousness' exposure to a constitutive impermanence, through which it can become aware of the fact that it cannot give itself to itself, but that it nevertheless holds a privileged position in regard to being.<sup>496</sup>

The neglect of this essence of mortality is for Heidegger also reflected in Hegel's concept of infinitude. The infinite for Hegel is the experience of obtaining a continuation of oneself through something different than oneself;<sup>497</sup> it is the reflection of a determinate being in that which is not itself. Something appears as belonging in a Oneness together with its opposite.<sup>498</sup> This turning into oneness through the other is a turn where the difference is sublated in non-difference, and yet, according to Hegel, remains a difference. The reflection in question takes place in the I, in a self-positing that at the same time would allow it to preserve this inner difference. Therefore, the infinite is logically the subject here, in terms of spirit.<sup>499</sup> At the Le Thor seminar, Heidegger does acknowledge the difference between bad and true infinitude in Hegel.<sup>500</sup> But in *GA 32*, Heidegger comments on how the *Absolvenz* of the absolute, its completion, for Hegel consists in a return into an infinite realm which *surpasses* consciousness in the sense that the prevalence of this absoluteness turns out to be indifferent to the finitude of mind. For Heidegger, on the contrary, the access to this sphere, as a return and as an arrival, is opened only in the need, the distress of finitude. In the end, he claims, there is nothing in Hegel's thinking that acknowledges this need or distress as something that puts the absolute at risk.<sup>501</sup> As Schmidt argues, the experience of Nothing and anxiety "opens up a finite horizon for reflection and so cannot lead to the Hegelian concept of the infinity of reflection".<sup>502</sup> Heidegger asks rhetorically: "Can and should man as transition try to leap away from himself

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<sup>495</sup> "Nur der Mensch 'hat' die Auszeichnung, vor dem Tod zu stehen, weil der Mensch inständig ist im Seyn: Der Tod das höchste Zeugnis des Seyns.", *Beiträge*, p 230. [*Contributions*, p. 163]. Heidegger claims further that the concept of being-towards-death in *SZ* now must be brought into the new context of the "turn", thus viewed on the basis of the openness to being. *Ibid.*, pp. 282-286.

<sup>496</sup> *GA 9*, p. 120.

<sup>497</sup> *GA 32*, pp. 110-114.

<sup>498</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 110.

<sup>499</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>500</sup> *GA 15*, p. 290.

<sup>501</sup> *GA 32*, pp. 55-56.

<sup>502</sup> Schmidt (1988), p. 95.

in order to leave himself behind as finite? Or is his essence not abandonment itself, in which alone what can be possessed becomes a possession?<sup>503</sup>

The figure of the Unhappy Consciousness taken into consideration, the lasting problem with the whole of Hegel's philosophy is for Heidegger that the experience of agony and transformation in consciousness does not seem to endanger it in a more profound respect. Nor does it defy absolute spirit as the self-arrival of identity, in its *telos* and actualization of history. Hegel does not make the withdrawal of being from the mind, which occurs in the negation of the negation, into a philosophical question in itself, a question which would also have to account for the historical dimension of this withdrawal. For Hegel, the negativity of the negation of negation is indeed experienced as self-dispersal and death, and still, absolute being remains unconditional and secured from the beginning.<sup>504</sup>

Following Heidegger's argumentation, the conversion of identity into a unity of being in the Hölderlinian sense, cannot be evoked within this account. The finite condition for the experience of being is for Heidegger the remaining obstacle to a manifestation of a supra-historical, collective reality encompassing us in terms of an absolute spirit in the respect considered by Hegel. If identity must be founded on the ek-static temporality and mineness of the human being, in its individual relationship to death, then there is no immediate transmission of this transformation to another human being in its temporality, nor to existence in general and the historical world in its entirety.

In his interpretation of the texts of GA 68, Pöggeler concludes that "Heidegger wants to bring this absolutization of the difference as negation of the negation to a decision, and thus dare the 'leap' into the questionableness of this problematic."<sup>505</sup> This can be considered as the core meaning of the whole volume. While being is unthinkable without the Nothing, inexperienceable and unthinkable outside of the ontological difference (*Unterscheidung*) that the Nothing indicates, the difference only happens as an event of which man must take responsibility, as a mindfulness of his finitude. Being differentiates itself ontologically, but solely the finite individual, if it assumes the place of Da-sein, can appropriate this differentiation.<sup>506</sup> In

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<sup>503</sup> "Soll der Mensch und kann er wahrhaft als der Übergang von sich selbst abspringen, um sich als das Endliche zu verlassen, oder ist sein Wesen nicht gerade die Verlassenheit selbst, in der allein ihm Besitzbares Besitz wird?", GA 32, p. 216. English translation by P. Emad and K. Maly as *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit* (1994), here p. 149.

<sup>504</sup> GA 68, p. 24.

<sup>505</sup> "Diese Verabsolutierung der Unterscheidung als Negation der Negation will Heidegger zur 'Entscheidung' stellen und damit den 'Sprung' in die Fragwürdigkeit dieser Problematik wagen.", Otto Pöggeler, "Hegel und Heidegger über Negativität", *Hegel-Studien. Vol. 30* (1995), p. 149. Cf. GA 68, p. 41.

<sup>506</sup> GA 68, pp. 43, 47.

the posthumous work *Mindfulness*, Heidegger shows that the meaning of mineness by no means is something which is surpassed by his later philosophy. The “turn” concerns only the implications of this radical individuation:

Da-sein is always *mine*. What does this want to say? It wants to say that in abiding the ‘t/here’[...] can be taken over and enacted purely and only in the *self*. [...] For *how* can this truth ever be if *thou thyself* do not take this truth seriously with your *thou* – if with this truth *you yourself* do not bring into play *your* enactment of your ‘most ownmost’? [...] ‘Da-*sein* is that which is always mine’; the grounding and preserving of the ‘t/here’ is ‘owned-over’ to me *myself*. But *self* means resoluteness unto the clearing of be-ing. In other words, the self-perserverance of the self is ‘owned over’ to the *disenownment* from every vain and accidental egoism – is ‘owning over’ unto en-owning.<sup>507</sup>

According to Heidegger, it is when being is no longer thought from out of the twofold in the Parmenidean sense, as something that is unveiled in a finite, resolute mineness, that it risks becoming reified. But this reification is not reducible to a mere representation of being as a static, external object. Rather, we could say, being is objectified, thought as an external object, insofar as it is *subjectified*, insofar as it is thought in terms of an all-encompassing subject. As this absolute subject, it is a  $\acute{\upsilon}\pi\omicron\kappa\epsilon\acute{\iota}\mu\epsilon\nu\omicron\nu$  that incorporates finite consciousness as an object within itself. This problem is complicated by the fact that it is the conscious human being that is viewed as the subject in question by Hegel. Thus, viewed from this perspective, being, reversely, becomes the object of consciousness.

As will be examined in the next subchapter, Heidegger accordingly criticizes Hegel from two directions on this point. Claimed by being, the origin of which it lacks access to, the human cannot, according to Heidegger, maintain an understanding of itself as the subject of its own existence. Further, the Sameness acknowledging itself in this event unfolds in the shared world and history of being. At the same time, however, being is only disclosed in its truth for Da-sein as individualized, as mindful of its finitude. For Heidegger, Sameness is therefore indeed understandable in terms of an “inward” as well as an “outward” identity, yet in another respect than for Hegel. In the unfolding of Heidegger’s own comprehension of identity, the

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<sup>507</sup> Da-sein ist je *meines*; was will das sagen? Daß die Inständig-keit im Da [...] rein und nur im *Selbst* zu übernehmen und zu vollziehen ist [...] denn *wie* soll sie das je sein, wenn *Du* nicht *selbst* mit ihr *Deinen* Ernst machst, wenn *Ihr* nicht *selbst* mit ihr *Euren* Vollzug Eures *eigenen* Wesens ins Spiel bringst? [...] Da-sein ist das je meine; die Gründung und Wahrung des Da ist mir *selbst* übereignet. *Selbst* aber heißt: Entschlossenheit in die Lichtung des Seyns. Mit anderen Worten: Der Selbst-stän-digkeit des Selbst ist übereignet die *Enteignung* von jeder eitlen und zufälligen Ichsucht in das *Ereignis*.”, *Besinnung*, GA 66, pp. 329-330. See also GA 40, p. 31. I will use P. Emad’s and T. Kalary’s 2006 translation of *Besinnung*, here pp. 292-293.

connection between Hegel's neglect of finitude and the Nothing, and the framework of subject metaphysics, must be further developed.

Schmidt contends that

because both Heidegger and Hegel bring time and history so fully into the idea of the subject, both come close to abandoning the very idea of a subject whatsoever. Neither Da-sein nor Spirit is best understood as what is commonly called a "subject", and both are defined essentially by their respective relations to time and history.<sup>508</sup>

While this is certainly true from one perspective, a deeper regard of the metaphysics of subjectivity will disclose a difference of conclusive importance between Hegel and Heidegger on this matter.

#### **4. The expansion of subjectivity and the loss of mineness**

The claim that "the substance is subject", stands out as emblematic for Hegel's philosophy. By this, however, Hegel did not stress the natural human subjectivity as a foundation for the substantiality of spirit. Rather, it is an expression of the fact that spirit, on the basis of its own power, becomes self-conscious through the human being. Self-consciousness is *subiectum/ὄποκειμένον* as self-unfolding being and thus absolute spirit. Spirit is its *own* subject because it reflects itself as human self-consciousness. In other words, human self-consciousness is subject only in so far as it is outside of itself in the manner stated above. In this respect, Hegel employed the Cartesian axiom of the self-certitude of consciousness only to transform it into a philosophy with other conclusions.

On Heidegger's reading, the consequences of this appropriation of the Cartesian framework is that the *subiectum* within the Hegelian system is represented as the eternal presence of the infinite absolute. My interpretation of this claim is the following: viewed in this way, spirit encloses consciousness, and can, by extension, be said to make it into its ultimately passive object. In terms of an object of the absolute, the meaning of limited mineness is obscured. Yet at the same time, in what becomes a transformation *and* preservation of the subject-object-dichotomy, it is *consciousness* that here must be viewed as the absolute *subiectum*. As such, *it* incorporates being as an objectivity, and expands itself in its self-reference. From this perspective, everything foreign to consciousness is sublated within it. As the consciousness of a Cartesian *ego cogito*, subjectivity would for Hegel be the representation of something, a rep-

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<sup>508</sup> Schmidt (1988), p. 43.

resentation that draws whatever is represented into itself, collecting it within the self.<sup>509</sup> On the path to self-knowledge, consciousness thus enlarges its subjectivity, in an expansion that is not merely infinite in space, but in time and history. In this way, the human being is the one in which being, as well as everything in being, is established. Its subjectivity becomes the “reference point” (*Bezugsmitte*) of being as such.<sup>510</sup>

In *The Principle of Reason*, Heidegger contrasts this situation with Greek thinking. For the Greeks, ὑποκείμενον was indeed a word that expressed resistance, but in the form of a *Gegenüber*, and not *Gegenstand*:

In the over-against, the “against” reveals itself in what comes over the perceiving, viewing-hearing human, over those who have never conceived of themselves as a subject for an Object. Accordingly, whatever is present is not what a subject throws forth as an Object; rather, it is what accrues to perceiving and what human viewing and hearing hold up and portray *as* what has come over it.<sup>511</sup>

“The presencing” (“*das Anwesende*”) was in this context understood as something that overwhelms the human being, something with divine proportions. Again, Heidegger brings out the meaning of νοεῖν here, as the very capacity to perceive the over-against as something which differs from, and yet belongs to the apprehension of it. For this reason, it was regarded as something dreadful by the Greeks, something of which the human could never dispose.<sup>512</sup>

For us, by contrast, objectivity is merely the correlate of subjectivity; an opposition which in reality is none. The more objective something is, the more subjectively it must be grounded and confirmed.<sup>513</sup> The absolute in Hegel could therefore equally be comprehended as consciousness' knowledge of itself as objectivity. According to Heidegger, this would be the final meaning of the argument that being only “is” as absolved consciousness. This anthropologization of being in Hegel's account is the self-certainty of the I enhanced into absoluteness.<sup>514</sup>

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<sup>509</sup> GA 5, pp. 429-430.

<sup>510</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>511</sup> “Im Gegenüber enthüllt sich das Gegen in dem, was über den vernehmenden, blickend-hörenden Menschen kommt, was den Menschen überkommt, ihn, der sich niemals als Subjekt für Objekte begriffen hat. Demgemäß ist das Anwesende nicht das, was ein Subjekt sich als Objekt zuwirft, sondern was auf das Vernehmen zukommt und was das menschliche Blicken und Hören *als* über es Gekommenes hin- und darstellt.”, GA 10, p. 121. [*The Principle of Reason*, p. 82].

<sup>512</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>513</sup> GA 5, p. 93.

<sup>514</sup> *Beiträge*, p. 337.

The condition for approaching the absolute, is for Hegel as well as for Heidegger a loss of self; yet the Hegelian thinking, according to Heidegger, does not bring out the consequences of this transformation, as it would extricate its own Cartesian premises.

This regard of being as an expanded subjectivity, as the subject-object-relationship sublated in the subject, Heidegger captures with the term subjectivity or subjectness (*Subjektivität*).<sup>515</sup> The purpose of this choice of words is to avoid a misunderstanding of this situation as subjectivism, and to illuminate that the ego cogito as subject for Hegel is the sphere of the bridging of the gap between subject and object. As Schmidt holds, subjectivity or subjectness is “the universal and common ground ontologically preceding the individual subject”.<sup>516</sup> The subject of subjectivity, the “reality of this real knowledge”, is the shining forth of the absolute itself. *Bewusstsein* is the name both for this presence, as well as the being who is present through it.<sup>517</sup> But where subjectivity constitutes the terms on which being is thought, being runs the risk of not being regarded and acknowledged as the occurrence of the openness in which all beings appear. Subjectivity, as the sending of being in modernity, is according to Heidegger the sending in which the possibility of the unconcealment of being withdraws. The understanding of the relationship between the conscious and judging human being, and being, in terms of a subject-object-relationship derived from the framework for relationships between and among beings, displays that being is now grasped on the basis of those beings, and not from out of itself. To refer back to Parmenides and the beginning of the occidental tradition, the twofold of being is disregarded, or rather the very alteration of sight and the experience that can apprehend this twofold. The very event of a belonging-together of being and man, following from a destruction of man's dispersal in beings, cannot be maintained by this thinking. In other words, although the very impetus of Hegel's project was to think that which enables and precedes the subject-object-dichotomy, it is destined to lead into the *fulfilment* of this division. Taminiaux accordingly contends that while the ontological difference indeed does appear in Hegel's philosophy, it “is absorbed into a conciliation in which it is eliminated and swallowed up in the indivisible unity of self-consciousness”.<sup>518</sup>

Regarded as self-grounding and as generating the shine of being, the Hegelian subject is the seat of an openness, but can no longer think the independency and enigma of this open realm.

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<sup>515</sup> GA 5, p. 133.

<sup>516</sup> Schmidt (1988), p. 132.

<sup>517</sup> “Die Wirklichkeit dieses Wirklichen”, GA 5, p. 146. [HCE, p. 110].

<sup>518</sup> Jacques Taminiaux, *Dialectic and Difference* (1985), p. 75.

But in this position, it is also absorbed by a self-forgetfulness, because of the simultaneous disregard of the meaning of its own, mortal mineness. As Raffoul puts it, “the ego covers over mineness”.<sup>519</sup> On the basis of this, Hegelian identity will be framed by the self-positing of a self-enclosed subject, and this subject's dismissal of its individuation, its facticity and ontological pain.

In order to fully apprehend Heidegger's interpretation here, we must once again remind ourselves of the presuppositions of his critique: in order to overcome the metaphysical premises of identity, we cannot abandon the metaphysical framework as a matter of an arbitrary, historical representation on the part of the subject of the thinker. Such an assumption is built upon the same interpretation of history and thought that Heidegger attempts to destruct. We can only challenge Hegel if we can appropriate the missing dimension of his thought. If this dimension is the sending of being as such, then it is more specifically the being-historical aspect of this sending that must be considered by us. The transition to an authentic identity involves our readiness for a self-reflection rooted in an apprehension of our own epoch of withdrawal and distress. It is in this distress that the appearance of being is offered to us. In taking on the distress as an epochal manifestation of the refused Nothing of being, we allow precisely for an experience of the brokenness of being's historicity, the distress of discontinuity and ruptures, distress as an utterance of the *finitude* conditioning all epochality.

As Schmidt argues, the problem with the notion of an absolute spirit is for Heidegger its inherent attempt to overcome an indispensable ambiguity in being, present in so far as being is finite – namely, the ambiguity of concealment and unconcealment.<sup>520</sup> This is the ambiguity that according to Heidegger structures historicity as such.

But for Hegel, historicity is essentially also a matter of intersubjectivity. How can this constituent be accounted for by Heidegger? With this question, we resume our questioning of Butler's problematization of identity from a Heideggerian perspective.

## **5. Response to Butler I: Heidegger on the problem of intersubjectivity**

For Hegel, mutual recognition is an indispensable aspect of the constitution of our identity. According to my interpretation of *PhG*, Hegel's reading of *Antigone* brings out the essence of this central trait of intersubjectivity. Following this reading of the tragedy, Hegel demonstrates that identity includes the recognition of the manifoldness of the voices of the world and

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<sup>519</sup> Raffoul (2003), pp. 209-210.

<sup>520</sup> Schmidt (1988), p. 135.

history. But the presence of spirit that constitutes identity, is also the presupposition for the true act of recognition. History as the unfolding of the manifoldness of self-consciousness, in the form of a multiplicity of subjectivity, is both a fragmentation of being, and the temporally unfolding reconstruction of being as spirit. Consciousness as spirit involves the recognition and sublation of intersubjective manifoldness in the form of an inward integration of its common root. This recognition is for Hegel the point at which history is reconciled, as the time and place where the voices of Antigone and Creon are equally valid. But the tragic structure of history has thereby not just dissolved; rather, consciousness has borne it as an *inner* diremption and dispersion, from out of which spirit is resurrected.

Now following the critique of Heidegger, we could ask the following question: can history itself strive towards an overcoming of its own tragic character through consciousness? Although Heidegger has not commented on Hegel's interpretation of *Antigone*, we could estimate that the problem for him here, again, would be that the negation of negation on the part of consciousness, as a readiness to assume the tragic dimension of existence, cannot immediately transfer the reconciliation aimed at to a collective-historical level. History as such will continue to be something tragic – that is, finite – in its essence. In assuming its own finitude, consciousness assumes the condition of historicity itself; in terms of a sending of epochs of being, history is limited, determined, in constant transformation.

Yet the task of taking on the sending of history is also for Heidegger a question of a responsibility for the historical, shared world. For Heidegger as well, it is a question of a transformation of the being-historical world. But it is a transformation only in terms of epochality, and never as a matter of a culmination of history in infinitude and eternity. History could never settle itself in any absolute sense, as this would eliminate its necessary ruptures both ontologically and logically. It would in other words eliminate the *need* for its own unfolding, as there would be no facticity and distress for consciousness to acknowledge, endure and let itself to be transformed by. What Hegel's thinking did not admit for, was the possibility of a formation of history in which the very prospect of identity-enactment as an unfolding of absolute spirit is foreclosed as such; where the structures or voices of the present obscure the possibility of this reconciliation.

The second problematic aspect of the Hegelian understanding of history, if Heidegger is to be followed in his implications, is that recognition is accounted for in terms of *intersubjectivity*. The manifestation of history as absolute spirit is understood in terms of a mutual recogni-

tion between subjects. As Sinnerbrink rightly remarks, Heidegger almost altogether ignores this theme, in Hegel and as such.<sup>521</sup>

The reason for this is however indicated in the few commentaries on intersubjectivity that Heidegger indeed makes. In *BH*, he argues that while not being the reality (*Wirklichkeit*) of the subject, existence is neither “the actuality of subjects who act with and for each other and so become who they are”.<sup>522</sup> In “The End of Philosophy and the Task of Thinking”, Heidegger, in another critique of Hegel, emphasizes that an open realm, a *freie Gegend*, is what first must prevail if subjects are to have the ontological possibility of opening up to one another, *recognizing* one other.<sup>523</sup>

Therefore, the theme of intersubjectivity for Heidegger does not automatically coincide with the question of historicity and the appropriation of the voices of history. The problem with the Hegelian account of identity, is that history, as well as the phenomenological structure of identity, can be interpreted in terms of consciousness’ turn towards itself as a subject. An account of intersubjectivity would therefore be the consequence and extension of the fact that the subject from the beginning is multiple, that it exists as a manifold of consciousnesses. As the subjectivity of consciousness in the Hegelian thinking becomes the locus of identity, becomes the place for a unity of being, it will reflect itself in being. This mirroring is not of immediate nature, but a self-reflection in which something foreign appears as the essence of the self. However, I argue, because of the framework of subject metaphysics and its necessary dimension of an intersubjectivity, the fundamental insight that this primary otherness is *being itself* cannot be maintained; the other, from now on, will be comprehended as the duplicated ego, that is, as the other consciousness in *its* subjectivity. In “Kierkegaard’s Speculative Despair”, a text on Kierkegaard's critique of Hegel, Butler thematizes this problem from the Kierkegaardian perspective, which in many ways also influenced Heidegger's critique of Hegel – yet without being able to problematize her own Hegelianism from the same point of view:

If what constitutes the self remains part of that self, then the self, whose task it is to take itself as its own object will of necessity take that prior ground of its own existence as its object, as well. It is in this sense that for Kierkegaard, the self that takes itself as its own object will of necessity take 'another' as its object, as well. In Hegel, this same formulation applies, but the 'other' who constitutes the self will be the social other, the community of other subjects who collectively supply the common social and historical world

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<sup>521</sup> Sinnerbrink (2001), pp. 207, 241, and 259.

<sup>522</sup> “die Wirklichkeit der mit- und für-einander wirkenden und so zu sich selbst kommenden Subjekte”, *BH*, p. 343. [*LH*, p. 261].

<sup>523</sup> “Das Ende der Philosophie und die Aufgabe des Denkens”, *GA* 14, p 80.

from which the particular subject is derived. That move, however, is for Kierkegaard symptomatic of a refusal to see what transcends the social and human world, namely, the transcendent or the infinite from which the social world in its concreteness is derived.<sup>524</sup>

Following Heidegger's readings of Hegel, the latter's conclusion that absolute spirit is subject will lead to a double disregard of the Sameness of being and man. The expansion of spirit as an absolute subject can imply the subjectivity of an all-encompassing identity of being that ultimately subjects the individual to its unity, disregarding the need of a seizure of the personal, in each case mine existence. In this respect, the individual becomes an object appropriated by the otherness of absolute spirit.

Yet, in so far as the dialectic is not maintained and comprehended as the dialectic of consciousness and being, but as consciousness' inherent self-dialectic or self-reference, this other that gives consciousness an identity will turn up to be the other subject. This other subject will thus be the author of one's identity, in a sense that deprives the first consciousness of ownness and self-reference.

But the subjectivity of absolute spirit also implies the unconditional subjectivation of consciousness, and from this perspective, *it* is now the only source and author of its identity, exactly because identity is founded upon its self-reflexivity. As an absolute subject, its identity is conditioned by the gradual appropriation of what is other and foreign outside of it, by the transformation of all *Gegenständlichkeit* into ownness. Its identity is an outward expansion, and in this expansion, it transforms the shared world as well as the foundations of the identity of the other.

At this point, it can be demonstrated that this chiasm underlies the problem of the Butlerian identity as well. Identity after Hegel will by her be interpreted in terms of an intersubjective dialectic, as the subject's struggle with the multiplicity of self-reflective egos. Hence, I argue, the subject, due to its intersubjective constitution, is torn between a subjection to the self-consciousness, the *judgment* of the other, and the position of being a stable reference-point for the creation and appropriation of identity, subjected only to itself. It is simultaneously absolute and dissolved, unconditionally free and passively bound, self-referring to the point that it *vanishes*. Within this paradigm, every subject constitutes its own terrain, and yet is immediately deprived of it under the power of the other. The subject sets reality through the judgment of its self-consciousness – but exactly for this reason, history, reality and finally the composi-

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<sup>524</sup> Judith Butler, *Senses of the Subject* (2015), p. 121.

tion of identity is to be understood as the historical and structural conglomerate of the judgments of others, always already challenging and displacing the own judgment.

However, the subject is only *indirectly* subjected to the other, as the origin of this chain of judgments cannot be found in any particular individual at a specific historical time or place, but in the prevalence of the metaphysics of subjectivity as such. Put differently, it can only be found in the self-assuredness of the judgment of self-consciousness. In Butler's account of identity, we must therefore recognize not the subversion, but a form of completion of subject metaphysics. Within this paradigm, identity as a strive for being becomes an impossible endeavor.

The next task is to think this situation further, as an epoch where power becomes the name for being, in order to form a full response to Butler. Towards the end of chapter seven, it should also have become clearer why and how Heidegger's critique of Hegel does not aim at a disregard of the social dimensions of history. On the contrary, this critique supports the effort to think that which governs this sociality in the first place, namely the historicity of the event of being.

## **6. Response to Butler II: understanding power as *Machenschaft***

Coming to the question of power in Heidegger, there are a couple of hermeneutical perspectives that can be engaged. To begin with, the conclusion that the problem of identity in our time is rooted in a completion of subject metaphysics, with all the inherent dilemmas that pertain to it, can be drawn regardless of whether Heidegger analyses the concept of power or not. The hypothesis that this completion is demonstrated in Butler's thinking, and that the origin of the problem of power in hers and Foucault's philosophies can be sought in the prevalence of the epoch of absolute subjectivity, could hopefully stand for itself. But as Heidegger indeed has his own interpretation of the phenomenon of power, it should be regarded within this inquiry.

The concept of power is first discussed by Heidegger in the context of his reading of Nietzsche's concept of the "will to power". The latter notion is extensively treated in the Nietzsche volumes,<sup>525</sup> but mentioned in other works as well, for instance in the volume where Heidegger's most extended account of power "in itself" is to be found, namely *GS*.

Although Heidegger takes this Nietzschean concept to be emblematic of the completion of metaphysics, it is not unambiguous. The will to power is for Heidegger one of the last names

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<sup>525</sup> Published as Vol. 6.1 and 6.2 of the *Gesamtausgabe*.

for being within the metaphysical paradigm; it is the name for being as something distinguished by its will and urge to prevail as powers within the human realm. At the same time, the concept reveals Nietzsche's disregard of a deeper recognition of the ontological difference, as the will to power also coincides with the will of subjectivity, of the human mind in its strive to expand in its being, taking itself as the source of this expansion. It is most likely from the presumed neglect of the difference between being and man within this notion, that Heidegger derives his account of plain power.

An important difference between the account of power found in *GS*, and Butler's or Foucault's, is its context. It is written during the war, and remains a critical reflection on the destructive power of the Nazi regime, as well as the totalitarianism of communism. In many ways, Heidegger's analysis of power stays within this context, for instance by claiming that the consequence of the essence of power would be the struggle of life and death (thus referring to Hegel's *PhG*).<sup>526</sup> Simultaneously, the theme of power in Heidegger, and especially in relation to history, certainly evokes the problematic question of his own political engagements with National socialism, and his now confirmed antisemitism. A comment on this is found in the last section of this chapter.

Although written in the era of modernity rather than postmodernity, Heidegger, in certain respects, seems to anticipate the discursive power that Foucault and Butler accounts for, which is not tied to an agent in any self-evident way. This interpretation is contended by Krzysztof Ziarek, who stresses how Heidegger, with the texts of *Mindfulness* and *GS*, "anticipates and, in some aspects, even goes beyond Foucault's later formulation of power in *Discipline and Punish* and *History of Sexuality*". Ziarek acknowledges that power in these volumes is analyzed as something having the character of not only negative, but *positive* and creative freedom: "As overpowering, power is always building ahead – ('constructive')." <sup>527</sup> On this, Ziarek comments: "Rather than being external to other relations, power flows through all relations and, in fact, determines the very shape, modality, and valency of relating; in other words, power unfolds tunes (*stimmt*) and determines (*bestimmt*)" and yet operates "in terms of calculability".<sup>528</sup>

Power in this respect, Heidegger holds, is something other than the exercise of force, and something more essential than violence. It will ultimately reign through permeating all that is

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<sup>526</sup> *GS*, p. 71.

<sup>527</sup> "Die Macht ist als Übermächtigung stets vorausbauend – ('konstruktiv')." *Ibid.*, p. 64. [*HB*, p. 56].

<sup>528</sup> Krzysztof Ziarek, "Art, Power, and Politics: Heidegger on *Machenschaft* and *Poesis*", *Contretemps* (2002), Vol. 3, pp. 177-178.

in being, including spheres and aspects that are usually not thought to be affected by it.<sup>529</sup> And the difference between having power, and “impotence” (*Ohnmacht*), will become relative.<sup>530</sup> What Heidegger tries to articulate, is how power becomes a name for being. Power is the way that being yields itself in modernity.<sup>531</sup>

But if power is a way in which being reigns, then power will not need somebody to bear it, he continues. When we see power in the hands of an individual or a group, it is not power that is being carried, but power that is carrying those individuals, forcing them. Power can never be owned by us, but we are the ones being owned by it.<sup>532</sup> Drawing on this, it could therefore be characterized as a turn against the human being, as a challenge of it. Because of this, power is also something that a person can exercise over a person that is not in possession of power.

Thought in this way, as an appearance of being, power, Heidegger writes, “must at once be extricated from the framework of ‘political’ considerations and positions and factions”.<sup>533</sup> It is so essentially belonging to modernity that the world wars cannot be regarded as its roots, and their end would not bring forth its demise. Power must be thought on the basis of a more thoroughgoing turn in being itself, characterized by a privation settled through the human being. Somehow, power is being's privative “twisting” of itself, visible as the subjection of the human being. This privation of being is what refuses humanity the possibility of “coming to itself”.<sup>534</sup>

That the mode of being in the epoch of power is subjectivity, is confirmed by the following quote in the volume: “Power cannot be seized (taken possession of), because we can only be possessed by it, since it is *unconditional subjectivity*.”<sup>535</sup> The quote, which is also a reference to Ernst Jünger’s *Der Arbeiter* from 1932, is more telling than it first appears. In the mode of unconditional subjectivity, we are possessed by power, rather than controlling it. Power is an expression of the regime of total subjectivity, if subjectivity is understood as “a metaphysical determination, not of the ego, but of the entire essence of the human in its relation to beings and to itself”.<sup>536</sup> When the I is grasped and lived exclusively in terms of a subject, it is understood and enacted metaphysically.

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<sup>529</sup> *GS*, p. 64.

<sup>530</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 66-67. [p. 57].

<sup>531</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>532</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64.

<sup>533</sup> “muß sogleich aus dem Rahmen ‘politischer’ Betrachtungen und Stellungnahmen und Parteiongen herausgenommen werden”, *Ibid.*, p. 66. [p. 57].

<sup>534</sup> “zu sich selbst zu kommen”, *Ibid.*, p. 71. [p. 61].

<sup>535</sup> “Die Macht kann nicht ergriffen werden (in Besitz gebracht), weil wir nur von ihr besessen werden können, da sie *unbedingte Subjektivität* ist.”, *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64. [p. 55].

<sup>536</sup> “nicht eine metaphysische Bestimmung des Ich, sondern des ganzen Menschenwesens in seiner Beziehung

Considering this, Ziarek argues that the decisive difference between Foucault and Heidegger is that Foucault, in contrast to Heidegger, holds his re-invention of the notion of power to be an overcoming of metaphysics, as this power is what cannot be owned or yielded. For Heidegger, “power in terms of fluid, often productive relations among forces does not amount to a non- or post-metaphysical perspective; it only allows us to see the operation of the still ‘metaphysical’ disposition of being as power”. Thus, Ziarek continues, “It is the occurring of being into and as power that constitutes history as metaphysical; or, to put it differently, as long as being occurs in terms of power, there is metaphysics.”<sup>537</sup>

What I therefore suggest with this explication of power in Heidegger, is that it should not merely be viewed as a parallel account to Butler’s (or Foucault’s). Rather, it must be acknowledged as an illumination of the presuppositions of the Butlerian thought. Power is an ontological sign that the human being has fully assumed the position of “unconditional subjectivity”, rather than defied it. It is a being-historical phenomenon, and as such it does not have its origin in ontic subjects, nor a specific occurrence in world history, and not even in the human being as such; instead, its origin is to be found in being's giving of itself as an epoch where the human being interprets and acts out itself as the basis of being.<sup>538</sup>

For Heidegger, the essence of the phenomenon of power is found in the wider process of *Machenschaft*, which is often translated as “machination”.<sup>539</sup> This concept explains how pow-

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zum Seienden *und* zu sich selbst enthält”, *Ibid.*, pp. 70-71. [p. 61].

<sup>537</sup> Ziarek (2002), pp. 177-178.

<sup>538</sup> Without going into Heidegger’s own exploration of the phenomenon of power in *GS*, as this work was first published 1998, Hubert Dreyfus’ “Being and Power: Heidegger and Foucault”, in *International Journal of Philosophical Studies* (1996), Vol. 4 (1), carries out a comparison between Heidegger and Foucault on the issue of power in relation to being, suggesting that the history of being in the former corresponds to the analysis of the regimes of power in the latter (p. 3). What I have tried to show here is that they cannot be compared in this way, because the epoch of discursive power or bio-power for Heidegger would represent or manifest a withdrawal of being, a refusal to properly acknowledge and think being. Dreyfus’ conclusion is further that Foucault ultimately strives to overcome disciplinary bio-power much in the same respect that Heidegger strives towards an overcoming of technicity/technology (pp. 7-12). The difference between them, Dreyfus argues, is that Foucault cannot account for why this overcoming would be necessary in the first place, as, according to him, there is no position outside of power from which it could be rendered as problematic, and thus challenged as such (p. 14). Here, I argue, the essence of the ambiguity of Foucault’s account of power is exposed: for Foucault, everything is regarded as power, as if pertaining to the ontology of what is – yet at the same time, it very much constitutes a problematic epoch in history. What lacks is exactly a being-historical interpretation of this tendency.

<sup>539</sup> See *GS*, p. 66. An argumentation opposite to Ziarek’s and mine is found in Timothy Rayner’s *Foucault’s Heidegger* (2007), where the author compares Foucault’s and Heidegger’s accounts of power without taking *GS* into account. According to both thinkers, he argues, objectivity as well as human life itself is reduced to “resource” by the technological power of modernity. For Foucault, “biopower” would be the name for this force, whereas Heidegger names it *Machenschaft* and *Gestell* (p. 86). For Heidegger, Rayner writes, power is the execution of subjectivity in this epoch (p. 91). According to Rayner however, a comparison between the two thinkers must take into account that Foucault never intended to analyse power as an ontological matter, but only as a question of politics, whereas Heidegger’s thinking on this point aims for a deeper understanding of the ontological in itself, carried out by way of a destruction of metaphysics and its history (p. 87). On the basis of this conclusion, Rayner argues against Dreyfus’ comparison (p. 177; cf. footnote nr. 538), claiming that Foucault would

er takes place as a comportment towards beings, as the relation that the modern subject will have to its world. It explains why the subject-object-relationship is not something historically and ontologically neutral, but involves a violence towards beings, a violence that has being as its ultimate target. The notion of *Machenschaft* appears in the period of 1936-1940, in *GS*, *Beiträge*, *Mindfulness* and in the lectures on Nietzsche. In *Mindfulness*, Heidegger gives the following description of the matter in question:

Machination here means the makability of beings which produces as well as makes up everything, such that only in this makability the beingness of beings that are abandoned by be-ing (and by the grounding of its truth) determines itself. (Here makable is thought as “watchable” = *watchful*. And hence makability is thought in the sense of *producibility*). *Machination* means the accordance of everything with producibility, indeed in such a way that the unceasing, unconditioned reckoning of everything is pre-directed.<sup>540</sup>

Machination implies a relationship to beings where these are considered in their malleability, as calculable objects defined according to their usefulness for the human subject. Later, and at first in “The Question Concerning Technology”, Heidegger uses the word *Ge-stell* instead of machination, rendered as “Enframing”,<sup>541</sup> to denote the same situation. In enframing, what is in being becomes a “standing-reserve” (*Bestand*) to be used.<sup>542</sup>

Vallega-Neu finds two determinations of machination in Heidegger. On the one hand, it denotes the comportment to beings explained above. This relation stems from the Greek interpretations of φύσις as τέχνη and ποίησις, which both signify different forms of producing. But it is only in modernity that this making connotes a making on the part of the human subject. Machination in the second sense, according to Vallega-Neu, arises when being appears

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insist that power in the Heideggerian account remains sovereign (pp. 93-94.), as power, in Foucault’s view, is de-centered, non-substantial and sustained by a chain of relations, and thus something beyond suppression (pp. 95-96). Yet according to both Heidegger and Foucault, Rayner continues, the involvement of power in technology partly surpasses human government and regulation, thus forming a self-sufficient force (pp. 100-101). According to my argument however, a comparison of Heidegger’s and Foucault’s understandings of power is not merely possible, but necessary, exactly *due to* the conflation of history, politics and ontology in the latter’s comprehension of the concept, inviting to a questioning of ontological presuppositions and origins.

<sup>540</sup> “Machenschaft heißt hier die alles machende und ausmachende Machbarkeit des Seienden, dergestalt, daß in ihr erst die Seiendheit des vom Seyn (und der Gründung seiner Wahrheit) verlassenem Seienden sich bestimmt. (Machbar ist hier gedacht wie ‘wachbar’ = *wachsam* und daher Machbarkeit im Sinne von *Machsamkeit*). Die *Machenschaft* ist das Sicheinrichten auf die Machsamkeit von Allem, so zwar, daß das Unaufhaltsame der unbedingten Verrechnung von Jeglichem vorgerichtet ist.”, *GA* 66, p. 16. [*Mindfulness*, p. 12].

<sup>541</sup> “Die Frage nach der Technik”, *GA* 7, p. 20. Translation by William Lovitt as “The Question Concerning Technology”, Martin Heidegger, *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (1977), p. 19.

<sup>542</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17. [p. 17].

solely in the form of a malleability of beings.<sup>543</sup> With this occurrence, machination “obscured its own unconcealment”, as Federico José Lagdameo expresses it.<sup>544</sup>

Machination is a way in which being prevails; it is a sending of being, and not something that is brought forward by the human being. Still, I have shown, this does not imply a passivity on the part of the human. As Pöggeler writes, “Through the history in which it is enmeshed, being is challenged to appear as malleable; the human being, on its part, is challenged to frame being as malleable“.<sup>545</sup> Machination employs the human in the respect that it is forced to close itself off from a self-comprehension gained from being, instead holding itself to be its own generating beginning – its own subjectum. The human holds the belief that it itself creates the being of beings, on the basis of its judgment and its actions.

But the horizon of subjectivity equally implies the turn towards the objectivity of beings. Objectivity ultimately means to be an object for a subject – the object-being of a thing is confirmed in this objectivity by and for a subject, the subject thus holding the measure for that which is. It is the consequence of this dialectic that Heidegger finds in the phenomenon of machination, as denoting the point where the overlapping of subjectivity and objectivity displays itself as a situation where beings cannot be perceived and thought in relation to being, but only as something absorbed within the realm of subjectivity. Machination can thus be understood as the “unleashing of beings to themselves“.<sup>546</sup> When beings are released “in themselves” or “to themselves” in this context, it means that they are from now on regarded in their ontical, rather than ontological determinations. The beings that inhabit the world of the subject are measured and used according to ontically “objective” standards. But objectivity, again, remains a status that must be defined and confirmed by a subject. Here, the term *Ge-stell* or *Gestell* is introduced in the place of machination. Within the constellation of enframing, Heidegger argues, beings may not even be called “objects” anymore, as they here begin to *lose* their objectivity, that is, all traces of independency. Instead, they become standing-reserves.<sup>547</sup>

In other words, the dichotomy of subject and object from the start seems to encompass its own inversion, an inversion where the border between subjectivity and objectivity is erased. However, this does not seem to occur in the respect that Hegel anticipated. Not merely the

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<sup>543</sup> Vallega-Neu (2003), pp. 59-60.

<sup>544</sup> Federico José T. Lagdameo, “From *Machenschaft* to *Ge-stell*: Heidegger's Critique of Modernity”, *Filocracia* (2014), Vol. 1 (1), p. 10.

<sup>545</sup> “Das Sein ist durch die Geschichte, in die es geraten ist, herausgefordert, sich als machbares herauszustellen; der Mensch ist herausgefordert, das Sein als machbares zu stellen.“, Pöggeler (1983), p. 147.

<sup>546</sup> “Loslassung des Seienden an es selbst”, *GS*, p. 73. [*HB*, p. 62].

<sup>547</sup> *GA* 7, pp. 27-28.

object will disappear into a status of standing reserve. The subject as well is from this perspective transformed into a "human resource". In claiming beings as standing reserves, as it understands and derives its being from the machination and challenging-forth (*Herausforderung*) of them,<sup>548</sup> the subject itself is claimed by these reserves. It is as if the everyday mode of being, that finds its self in the preoccupations with beings, here is transformed into a possession of beings in which their whole resistance is conquered. As we refuse this resistance, we fail to distinguish our own existence as something other than this fascination or dispersion. In neglecting its mineness in this respect, the human has, as a subject, suddenly itself become the object of the totality of beings, through the fact that it experiences this totality as a subjectivity claiming *it*. It has no control over "its" power, precisely because power is what controls it. And as other human subjects are among those beings employed as standing-reserves, they, too, can be said to "have" this power over the subject. Machination, according to my argumentation, reflects itself as power where the positions of the subject and the object are interchangeable.<sup>549</sup> In his "Science and Reflection" from 1953, Heidegger indeed stresses that the subject-object relation in reality does not end with the epoch of *Gestell*, but here reaches into its essence, its "most extreme dominance".<sup>550</sup>

It is important to understand the term challenging-forth in a broad sense here, as well as the term beings. Not only concrete, physical beings used as concrete material are intended in this analysis. Following a work like "The Age of the World Picture", world views must also be considered here,<sup>551</sup> as well as, I add, categories that structure the content of identity: they are beings challenged-forth in the sense that they are used in the service of a self-confirmation of the subject.

Thus, I argue, identity today is constituted and lost on the basis of *this* dialectic of subject and object. When the human understands itself as subject, and accordingly comprehends being as the doing, thinking and power yielded by this subject, the very impact of being in its

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<sup>548</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17. [*The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays*, p. 16].

<sup>549</sup> Cf. Taminiaux, who argues that the subject-object dichotomy not merely does away with the ontological difference, but with difference in all respects, difference as such, as "from the beginning, this relation happens by means of reducing one of the terms to the other". "The peculiarity of the object in its objectness – which is the cogito itself, already stretched out in front of itself as that which (in a way seemingly distinct from the object) merely offers itself to itself, places itself before itself, re-presents itself", Taminiaux (1985), p. 66. Likewise, Elisabeth Deeds Ermarth has an interesting view on the post-Cartesian transformation of the subject/object-dichotomy, describing it as a condition where subjectivity has become objective, or where "the only objectivity is total subjectivity", Deeds Ermarth (1992), p. 110.

<sup>550</sup> "äußerste, aus dem Ge-Stell vorbestimmte Herrschaft", "Wissenschaft und Besinnung", *GA* 7, p. 55. English translation by W. Lovitt as "Science and Reflection", *The Question Concerning Technology and Other Essays* (1977), p. 173.

<sup>551</sup> "Die Zeit des Weltbildes", *GA* 5, p. 188.

own right remains concealed, experienced only as the distress of a withdrawal. Being, Heidegger argues, recoils as the distress of distresslessness, which upon my argumentation is one way to characterize the essence of modern power in the construction of identity.<sup>552</sup> In the era of power, being will be experienced as something which “haunts” man from an oblique distance, as a force to which it is only possible to respond with a more or less provisional strengthening of the subject, because this is experienced as the target of the threat. But this logic cannot be grasped by the subject itself. In *Mindfulness*, Heidegger characterizes anthropomorphism as exactly the conviction that beings obtain their determinateness on the basis of human representation as one “among other processes of life”.<sup>553</sup>

Within the epoch of power and machination, the question of the origin of these phenomena from the beginning precludes itself. For Heidegger, this is how the era where “thinking thinks only itself” ultimately will take form. Within this framework of understanding, the origin can only be yet another judgment or thought, another simultaneously displaced and absolutized subject. As a summary of this response to Butler's query, we could conclude that *we* are the ones subjugating ourselves through power in the constitution of our identities, insofar as we grasp and live identity in terms of subjectivity.

But how is power to be over-powered? For Heidegger, the master of power is none other than the one who transforms its essence into a differentiation of being and beings, or rather: lets him- or herself to undergo this transformation.<sup>554</sup> With this step, we return to *IuD*. But first, a reflection on Heidegger's antisemitism in the light of the *Black Notebooks*.

## **7. On antisemitism, power and machination in the *Black Notebooks***

With Heidegger's thought of a history of being, together with his understanding of the phenomenon of power, the difficult question of his antisemitism must also be posed. Although Heidegger's engagements with National Socialism are already well recognized, the matter has certainly become more urgent with the publication of the so-called *Black Notebooks*, a series of philosophical sketches of more informal and private character, written by Heidegger between 1931 and 1969 in a total of 34 small journals.<sup>555</sup> In *Heidegger und der Mythos der*

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<sup>552</sup> For Heidegger's description of how distresslessness is connected to *Machenschaft*, see *Beiträge*, p. 130. On the connection between distress and forgetfulness of being, see *ibid.*, pp. 233-234.

<sup>553</sup> “Lebensvorgang unter anderen“, *GA* 66, p. 159. [*Mindfulness*, p. 137].

<sup>554</sup> *GS*, p. 21.

<sup>555</sup> Hitherto, the notebooks from the years 1931-1951 have been published in five volumes of the *GA*: *Überlegungen II-VI (Schwarze Hefte 1931-1938)*, *GA* 94; *Überlegungen VII-XI (Schwarze Hefte 1938/39)*, *GA* 95; *Überlegungen XII-XV (Schwarze Hefte 1931-1938)*, *GA* 96; *Anmerkungen I-V (Schwarze Hefte 1942-1948)*, *GA* 97, and *Anmerkungen VI-IX (Schwarze Hefte 1942-1948)*, *GA* 98.

*jüdischen Weltverschwörung (Heidegger and the Myth of a Jewish World Conspiracy)* from 2014, Peter Trawny, the editor of the notes, has summarized their underlying nationalist and antisemitic assumptions. In these notebooks, Trawny argues, it becomes clear that Heidegger's notion of machination to some extent is grounded in the antisemitic theory on "World Jewry", which Heidegger in turn founds on the assumption that the Jews, more than any other group, are responsible for the mindset of "calculation" and "reckoning".<sup>556</sup> Trawny refers to this as a "being-historical antisemitism" ("*seinsgeschichtlicher Antisemitismus*").<sup>557</sup> Parallel with this runs Heidegger's narrative of Germany and the destiny of the German people. According to this narrative, Germany would be the nation mainly chosen to enforce the other beginning, as a destruction and appropriation of the spirit of the Greeks.<sup>558</sup> Certainly, this belief in the spiritual and cultural capacity of a nation does not have to be National Socialist in itself. Here, however, the context of the war and its fatal ideology cannot be omitted; with the notebooks, Heidegger's nationalism has proven to be interwoven with National Socialism, as well as a resentment towards the "non-German", above all the Jews.

The most critical component of this antisemitism from a philosophical, and not merely ethnic-political, point of view, is found in Heidegger's explanation of the refusal of his nation to acknowledge its own destiny to "prepare the site for the truth of being".<sup>559</sup> His contempt for the "absolution of the race thought",<sup>560</sup> what he considered to be a "vulgar" concept of National Socialism,<sup>561</sup> as well as for the brutality of the war itself, among other things, was no lesser than the contempt for machination and calculative thinking. Early on, he recognized the interconnectedness of these phenomena, and was therefore compelled to admit that Germany had deviated from what he considered to be its proper vocation. But in thinking the deviation of the supposed course of Germany, Heidegger demonstrates a monumental failure of the same mindfulness of thinking that he otherwise advocated. The common root of the problems of the world war, its ideologies, as well as of modernity as such, is taken to be the sending of machination and calculative thought. But these phenomena are, as it were, ultimately ascribed to the mentality of the Jewish people.<sup>562</sup> The politics of the factual National Socialism and the war, as well as the ontology framing it, are explained as consequences of a sending of being

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<sup>556</sup> GA 96, p. 56.

<sup>557</sup> Peter Trawny, *Heidegger und der Mythos der jüdischen Weltverschwörung* (2014), p. 11

<sup>558</sup> GA 94, p. 27.

<sup>559</sup> "dem Seyn die Stätte seiner Wahrheit bereitet", GA 95, p. 339.

<sup>560</sup> GA 96, p. 48.

<sup>561</sup> GA 94, pp. 142 and 173.

<sup>562</sup> GA 95, pp. 96-97; GA 96, p. 56.

emerging from Judaism particularly, a sending that obscures the openness to the other beginning.<sup>563</sup>

Bringing this up, my purpose in the following is not to develop the subject of Heidegger's antisemitism in these notebooks, its character and depth, further. This has been carefully done in other works, and is still a topic of ongoing research.<sup>564</sup> Neither do I wish to (re)construct an apologetic explanation for his statements or resentment, nor pose it as irrelevant to his philosophy. Rather, I would like to present a way in which Heidegger can be read against himself in this matter, on the very basis of the thought of the sending and proper response to being, as well as his own conception of power as it is developed in this context in *GS*. I will attempt to show how Heidegger, with his resentment, and his accusations, betrays the fundamental premise of his own thought. This reading will also further motivate my use of these Heideggerian figures of thought, despite the *Black Notebooks*.

Heidegger accuses the Jews of the kind of ubiquitous and creative power which, according to the Heideggerian argument brought out in my thesis, constitutes a sending of being. It is a power that must be regarded as ontological rather than political or ideological, meaning that it goes deeper than the latter two – an assumption that is also necessary in order to support the claim that a Jewish mindset determined the framework which allowed for the political power of the Nazis. But what are the characteristics of such an ontological power, according to Heidegger? And how is the human responsible for the sending of being in the first place? The answer has been explored above. The power of machination emanates from a specific, human responsivity to being. The sending of being is established in this responsivity, in the kind of adherence to being that the human conducts. That being is sent as power, means that it discloses itself both as a confirmation of the forming, self-legislative capacities of the human subject, *and* as a threat to the latter's autonomy and integrity. Yet as a sending, it does not first emerge from the actions of any human agent. To claim this, would ultimately be to confirm the very subject metaphysics that Heidegger attempts to overcome with this philosophy in the first place. Rather, power emerges from, and is continued by, the human tendency to claim being in terms of a power that both sustains and suppresses the subject. The logical conclusion that must be drawn from this, is that there can be no "elsewhere" of power and machi-

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<sup>563</sup> Trawny (2014), pp. 66-69; cf. *GA* 96, pp. 243 and 133.

<sup>564</sup> See for instance A. Mitchell and P. Trawny (eds.), *Heidegger's Black Notebooks: Responses to Anti-Semitism* (2017); A. Denker and H. Zaborowski (eds.), *Zur Hermeneutik der "Schwarzen Hefte"*, *Heidegger-Jahrbuch*, Bd. 11 (2017); I. Farin and J. Malpas (eds.), *Reading Heidegger's Black Notebooks 1931-1941* (2016); Donatella Di Cesare, *Heidegger e gli Ebrei*, transl. from the Italian by M. Baca as *Heidegger and the Jews: the Black Notebooks* (2018), and D. Espinet, G. Figal et al. (eds.), *Heideggers "Schwarze Hefte" im Kontext* (2018).

nation than this tendency itself. The location of power is the apprehension of being as power. This apprehension *is* the exertion of machination.

In the light of this, Heidegger's projection of this characterization of modernity onto a specific ethnic group, can be viewed as a display of his own difficulties to resist and transform the epoch of machination. If the prevalence of machination and power, as Heidegger claims, is characterized by being an omnipresent, ontological phenomenon, and if that omnipresence defines its danger more than anything else, then this implies that its predominance only can be understood, resisted and transformed on the level of Da-sein. Power must be countered within the realm from which it first emerges, namely the "being-there" of human existence, which is, inevitably, in each case mine. To be "there" is to be aware of one's being, which in turn is the realm in which being in itself, as an other to man, can become experienceable, thinkable and questionable.

To resist power and machination would, in this sense, correspond to the courage to prevail in Da-sein according to Heidegger's later definition of the word. This dwelling is what can fulfil the demand on the individual to take responsibility for the ontological distress of being. In Da-sein, the human being assumes it as its own distress, thus letting the being-historical and the personal level to appear as inseparable. Da-sein is, if the consequences of Heidegger's own logic should be taken seriously, the only possible place for an *Auseinandersetzung* with the distortion and concealment of being in terms of power. In this confrontation, power can be deprived of its character of uncanny abstraction, and become accessible as a sending of *being* and not of man.

The conclusion that can be drawn from this, is that a refusal of this responsibility, with all its existential implications, would enhance the risk of a displacement of being to the level of ideology and politics – thus instead advocating a responsibility which is always found *otherwise* than in the each-mineness. But what would the proper label for this deferred understanding of the location of being be, if not subjectivism and machination? That which Heidegger had attempted to seize with these labels, is nothing else than the tendency to avoid the care for one's finitude, and the possibility of facing the depth of being which follows from it – in other words, to avoid Da-sein, which finally means to be one's "there" *oneself*. The confrontation with the own finitude is the only gesture that can liberate man from the view of himself as his own subject. It is as an egoic subject that he finds himself to be targeted by the power of other subjects in the sense of machination, in exactly the sense that Heidegger believes himself and the German nation to be targeted by the Jews. The belief that man reigns

over being is hereby projected on the other, rather than recognized and challenged as a compulsion in the own existence. The thought that other human beings than I myself control and direct the sending of being, presumes that I have first asserted the human as a subject of this kind, capable of this kind of control.

Thus, our critique of Heidegger's antisemitism – and of antisemitism and political projections generally – can benefit from the premises of Heidegger's own thought. If we disregard the premise that the privileged access to being is to be found in *every* Da-sein, regardless of nationality as well as every other social, biological or geographical determination, we ourselves risk repeating Heidegger's mistake – perhaps not as antisemitism, but by holding another group than the Jews responsible for that which cannot be challenged on a political level. The question is, if returning to the context and topic of this thesis, if the danger would be lesser if this group ultimately becomes more and more undefined, as in Butler's thought, or if the problem of power and its origin thereby becomes even harder to mind and think philosophically.

How, then, could we appropriate Heidegger's thought of a history and sending of being as something unspecified in terms of nationality and geographic space? Taking Heidegger on his own words in the works used in this thesis, belonging means a belonging to *being*, not to any specific nation. Belonging-together suspends ordinary identity, for instance in terms of a belonging to a nation, instead turning our yearn for belonging towards itself. This yearning is being longing for itself through us. Therefore, the temporal dimension of this belonging, what Heidegger names the event, cannot as such be understood on the basis of any specific historicity. Rather, the event is the enactment that gives meaning to the otherwise objectified history, redeeming the naturally distant and external character of collective time, as it lets it to coincide with the "own" temporality. To prepare for the event in this sense would not mean to settle in the tradition in order to anticipate any *particular* happening, revolution or social constellation emerging from it, but to establish a relation to history and geography that is informed by spacious freedom. Hence, it can be understood as a de-objectification of tradition, if tradition is understood as something that can be owned, or an object that can be lost. Yet at the same time, it is an objectification of this kind that can be traced in Heidegger's antisemitic views on history.

Therefore, the enactment of the event, although transmitted by a particular tradition, can, as I have argued, only have its proper, original place in the here and now of the *Da*, which is

an *ontological* dimension of the human, not a social or historical one. This view on the matter has a lot in common with Trawny's, who writes:

The question, however, is how being itself, this totally-other-to-beings, would favor a signature which would allow precisely the Germans (and the Greeks) to 'prepare a site for it'? Indeed, it can be claimed that the thinking of being itself is of Greek origin. But nothing gives reason to assume that being itself would have to preserve this origin, as it does not display anything – not even a language – through which its 'rootedness' in a historical constellation of two people would be possible.<sup>565</sup>

Trawny does not deny that philosophy, and the thought of being which takes place herein, has a historical and geographical shape. Still, "that does not change the fact that the thought of something like being itself forbids that we inscribe historical attributes into it, thus reserving it for specific narratives".<sup>566</sup>

While I agree with Trawny on the whole, I would add that being indeed is accessible in the act of preparing a site for it, which, in turn, will be informed by a tradition. But this tradition cannot *lay claim* to being. It can only express it in a finite way. This difference between the tradition and being itself, meaning that being *gives* itself as a tradition, but does not *exhaust* itself as any tradition, is a demonstration of the ontological difference itself.

This said, I have attempted to show that I am not unaware of the problems that arise with certain figures and claims in Heidegger's philosophy. When still employing them isolated from his ideological tendencies, my hope is to bring out a view of identity which also runs counter to any extremist conceptions of identity and belonging, including those of Heidegger. Hopefully, it is one of the more fruitful ways to appropriate and reject a thinker at the same time.

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<sup>565</sup> "Die Frage ist aber, wie dem Sein selbst, diesem ganz Anderen zum Seienden, eine Signatur eignen soll, die es gerade den Deutschen (und den Griechen) erlaubt, ihm 'eine Stätte zu bereiten'? Zwar liesse sich behaupten, dass das Denken des Seins selbst eine griechische Herkunft habe. Doch nichts gibt Anlass anzunehmen, dass das Sein selbst diese Herkunft zu bewahren hätte, da es nichts aufweist – nicht einmal eine Sprache –, wodurch die 'Verwurzelung' in einer geschichtlichen Konstellation zweier Völker möglich würde.", Trawny (2014), p. 77.

<sup>566</sup> "Das ändert aber nichts daran, dass der Gedanke eines Seins selbst es verbietet, ihm geschichtliche (oder historische) Attribute einzuschreiben und es so für spezifische Narrative zu reservieren.", *Ibid.*, p. 78.

## Chapter Seven. Belonging-together as *Austrag*: towards a new understanding of identity

### 1. Difference as *Austrag*, *Differenz* and *Unterschied*

For Heidegger, it is the ontological difference that due to its own inner logic of concealment leads to a forgetfulness of itself. In the case of Hegel, being becomes equal to thought and judgment due to being's appearance as ground, a ground which thinking, in turn, must found: "the being of beings reveals itself as the ground that gives itself ground and accounts for itself".<sup>567</sup> On the basis of this logic, the positions of grounding and of being grounded will intersect as a relationship between two *beings*, grounding one another. As such, they will perpetually interchange the positions of subject and object, of grounder and the grounded.

As a transformation of this problematic, the account of identity and difference in Heidegger is founded upon a reconsideration of the ontological difference. It aims to introduce an understanding of an interdependency of being and man where man recovers a Same-ness with being. In this interdependency, being is approached and understood as an abyss (*Abgrund*), an abyss which grounds and needs beings, yet is not itself in need of a ground.<sup>568</sup> Within this understanding, man "is" himself as he is the site for the self-manifestation of being, and not in reference to an identity upheld by spatiotemporally given beings.

In the introduction of the English translation of *IuD*, Joan Stambaugh writes that both *SZ* and *IuD* deal with the formulation of the reciprocity of being and the human. The decisive difference between these works, she stresses, is that the former approaches being through the *Dasein* of the human being, whereas *IuD* inquires into the relatedness between the two in its own right, into "the relation as a relation".<sup>569</sup> Vail suggests that while for early Heidegger "it is through man that the ontological difference becomes 'factual', that is, the Difference is 'in' man", Heidegger's later thought rather argues that "man is 'in' the Difference". Vail continues: "On the one hand the ontological difference is thus constitutive of the very being of man; on the other hand man is the crucial thing-which-is for whom the ontological difference pre-

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<sup>567</sup> "Das Sein des Seienden entbirgt sich als der sich selbst ergründende und begründende Grund.", *IuD*, p. 65. See also *Der Satz vom Grund*, GA 10, and "Vom Wesen des Grundes", GA 9.

<sup>568</sup> GA 10, p. 166.

<sup>569</sup> Joan Stambaugh, "Introduction", *ID*, p. 8.

vails.<sup>570</sup> Sinnerbrink remarks that all of Heidegger's works from the late fifties revolve around the problem of difference in reference to the relation between being and the human.<sup>571</sup>

However, not only the works from the period mentioned above, but the posthumous works from the 30's and 40's as well, such as *The Event (Das Ereignis)* and *Beiträge*, are in several ways concerned with the issue of difference from this perspective.

An etymological and terminological note on how the concepts of *Differenz*, *Unterscheidung* (*Unterschied*) and *Austrag* are used in the mentioned works should first be made. In a section from the second Nietzsche volume, Heidegger writes that the phenomenon denoted by the term *Unterscheidung* is brought out more distinctly in its essence with the word *Differenz*. The latter word shows that “beings and being are somehow set apart from each other, separated, and nonetheless connected to each other, indeed of themselves, and not simply on the basis of an 'act' of 'differentiation' “. <sup>572</sup> A point is here made that Heidegger would often return to, namely, that the ontological difference is not made by reason or thinking, but rather is the happening which allows for thinking, for beings and being in the first place. He continues: “Differentiation as ‘difference’ means that a *settlement* [Austrag] between Being and beings exists.” <sup>573</sup> (Brackets in original.) In a comment on this, Inwood points out the relatedness between the latin etymology of *Differenz* in *differre*, literary meaning ”to hold apart“, and the german *austragen*, meaning ”to carry out, deliver, deal with, settle [sic] “. Thus, he writes, ”Austrag is 'settlement [sic], resolution [e.g. of a dispute]”. (2nd bracket in original.) Hence ”die *Differenz* of being and beings is also an *Austrag* of diem [sic], bringing them together as well as keeping them apart“. <sup>574</sup> Similarly, Sinnerbrink emphasizes that *Austrag* is a “unity-in-difference”, and not a plain difference and holding-apart.<sup>575</sup> Stambaugh translates *Austrag* as ”perdurance”, “literally carrying out, holding out”. She comments on the translation with the following words:

“In a consultation Heidegger pointed out the relationship of this word to man as ‘the stand-in of nothingness’ (*What is Metaphysics?*). He stated that its basic meaning is to bear, to hold out, but without any

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<sup>570</sup> Vail (1972), p. 48.

<sup>571</sup> Sinnerbrink (2001), p. 234.

<sup>572</sup> ”daß Seiendes und Sein irgendwie auseinandergetragen, unterschieden und doch auf einander bezogen sind - von sich aus, nicht erst aufgrund eines 'Aktes' der 'Unterscheidung' ". GA 6.2, p. 285. English translation by D. F. Krell as “European Nihilism”, Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche. Vol. IV: Nihilism* (1991), p. 155.

<sup>573</sup> ”Unterscheidung als ‘Differenz’ meint, daß ein *Austrag* zwischen Sein und Seiendem besteht.“, *Ibid*.

<sup>574</sup> Inwood (1999), p. 47.

<sup>575</sup> Sinnerbrink (2001), p. 252.

connotation of suffering or exertion. The *Austrag* is the carrying out of the 'relation' of being and beings, endured with an intensity that never lets up."<sup>576</sup>

I choose to employ the translation of "holding out", as it emphasizes the inherent facticity of the ontological difference, showing that this difference discloses itself in terms of an existential-ontological friction. Understood properly, this friction does not only imply an enduring extended in time, but a resistance that takes possession of the spatial and corporeal human existence as well. As I have already shown, this cannot take place without any connotations of suffering, a fact that is brought out from a variety of perspectives in Heidegger's corpus.

But Heidegger often uses the word *Unterscheidung* as well, and sometimes makes a philosophical point of its literal meaning. In *Beiträge, Differenz* and *Unterschied/Unterscheidung* are used interchangeably. In the same work, he also partly distances himself from these concepts altogether, holding the notion of an ontological difference to be of preparing character in the transition from the guiding-question (*Leitfrage*) of metaphysics to the grounding-question (*Grundfrage*) of being.<sup>577</sup> The argument here is that the question of this difference has its place within metaphysics and in the confrontation with it.

Yet the overcoming of this difference is not a question of theoretical conversion, but of enduring what is discording (*das Zwiespältige*). Only then, Heidegger claims, can the leap away from this difference become a matter of a leap into the event of Da-sein.<sup>578</sup> In other words, it is not a question of omitting to use this concept, but of giving oneself over to the event expressed in it, to let it manifest itself within the own spatiotemporally given existence. Accordingly, Heidegger later repeats that the difference is no key or theorem for ontological examination, but that its only meaning and weight is found in "the character of a passage".<sup>579</sup>

In *To the Thought of the Event (Zum Ereignis-Denken*, published as GA 73), both *Differenz* and *Unterschied* are important concepts, whereas *Unterschied* is the word mainly used in *The Event*. In the latter, it is explicitly presented together with the concept of the turn and the event, the latter as something that simultaneously brings out the essence of the human.<sup>580</sup> Here, Heidegger holds that the difference first was "objectified" as "ontologische Differenz" in *SZ*.<sup>581</sup>

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<sup>576</sup> Stambaugh (2002), p. 17.

<sup>577</sup> *Beiträge*, p. 258. [*Contributions*, p. 182].

<sup>578</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 250-251. [pp. 176-177].

<sup>579</sup> "das Durchgangsmäßige", *Ibid.*, p. 467. [p. 328].

<sup>580</sup> *Das Ereignis*, GA 71, p. 123.

<sup>581</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 131.

In *IuD*, these various considerations are gathered together into a more solid understanding of what the ontological difference implies when thought out of the Sameness:

Being here becomes present in the manner of a transition to beings. [...] being transits (that), comes unconcealingly over (that) which arrives as something of itself unconcealed only by that coming-over. Arrival means: to keep concealed in unconcealedness – to abide present in this keeping – to be a being. Being shows itself as the unconcealing overwhelming. Beings as such appear in the manner of the arrival that keeps itself concealed in unconcealedness. Being in the sense of unconcealing overwhelming, and beings as such in the sense of arrival that keeps itself concealed, are present, and thus differentiated, by virtue of the Same, the differentiation. That differentiation alone grants and holds apart the "between," in which the overwhelming and the arrival are held toward one another, are borne away from and toward each other. The difference of being and beings, as the differentiation of overwhelming and arrival, is the perdurance (*Austrag*) of the two in unconcealing keeping in concealment.<sup>582</sup>

With the expression of *Austrag*, holding out, Heidegger attempts to think the essence of the ontological difference. It points towards a resolute settlement of two parts, but a settlement which at the same time first confirms and brings out the parts in their respective essence. None of them has an agency that precedes this settlement, but beings arrive in themselves *together* with the overwhelming of being, in which the latter unveils itself. The resolution occurs in and is taken from two directions at once.<sup>583</sup> But if this is indeed to be acknowledged as a happening, as an arrival and overwhelming, and not another theoretical enterprise about the ontological difference, it must be taken into account how *we* are involved in this, as the beings where this holding out comes about. Being and beings, it is said, manifest in their separate essence, and thus in their intrinsic reciprocity, on the basis of a differentiation which forms a "between" (*Zwischen*) in which this takes place as an event. This between is in turn

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<sup>582</sup> "Sein west hier in der Weise eines Überganges zum Seienden. [...] Sein geht über (das) hin, kommt entbergend über (das), was durch solche Überkommnis erst als von sich her Unverborgenes ankommt. Ankunft heißt: sich bergen in Unverborgenheit: also geborgen anwähren: Seiendes sein. Sein zeigt sich als die entbergende Überkommnis. Seiendes als solches erscheint in der Weise der in die Unverborgenheit sich bergenden Ankunft. Sein im Sinne der entbergenden Überkommnis und Seiendes als solches im Sinne der sich bergenden Ankunft wesen als die so Unterschiedenen aus dem Selben, dem Unter-Schied. Dieser vergibt erst und hält auseinander das Zwischen, worin Überkommnis und Ankunft zueinander gehalten, auseinander-zueinander getragen sind. Die Differenz von Sein und Seiendem ist als der Unter-Schied von Überkommnis und Ankunft: der *entbergend-bergende Austrag* beider.", *IuD*, p. 71. [*ID*, pp. 64-65].

<sup>583</sup> Cf. Pöggeler (1983), p. 150: "Sein und Seiendes erscheinen je in ihrer Weise aus der Differenz her."; "Sein ist nicht etwas anderes als das Seiende; wäre es etwas anderes, dann wäre es ja wieder Seiendes – und die ontologische Differenz wäre zur bloßen ontischen verkehrt"; "Dieser Unterschied stellt nicht zweierlei nebeneinander, sondern öffnet das Seiende in sein Sein, einigt es in die Selbigkeit mit ihm selbst, trägt diese Selbigkeit aus." The divergence between the Hegelian and Heideggerian accounts, Pöggeler shows, is settled in the latter's argument that being and man are not two things which are at first separated, in order to be brought together subsequently. Rather, they *are* only in the transition to one another. *Ibid.*, p. 147.

the dimension of Da-sein, the mode in which the human being surrenders to being. The ontological difference is therefore a question of the event of being the “there” of existence, as a matter of holding out this existence as such. Beyond and without the standing in this event, it is impossible to “know” the phenomenon of an ontological differentiation.<sup>584</sup>

In this resolution, being and the human being each “settle” in different ways. Only humans strive to reach themselves in an overcoming of their immediate state of being. Because they lack an immediate access to their most own, their lives constitute an attempt to achieve an *arrival* in the yet unknown ownness. Being, on the other hand, appears in its essence when appearing as the light in which the destination of these beings first can appear, *as* this light of being. Understood in this way, the human, Heidegger argues, is “delivered over to the ownership of being and being is appropriate to the essence of man”.<sup>585</sup>

Da-sein is in this sense referred to as “*the occurrence of encleavage [Erkliftung] of the turning-midpoint of the turning in enowning*”.<sup>586</sup> and “In the history of the truth of being Dasein is the essential *case of the between [Zwischenfall]*, i.e., the case of falling-into that ‘between’ [Zwischen] into which man must be displaced, in order above all to be *himself*.” (Brackets in original.)<sup>587</sup>

These passages stress the transformation of the term of Dasein after *SZ*. According to both *Beiträge* and *SZ*, it is as Dasein that the human can “be” itself. But following the quotes from *Beiträge* rendered above, Da-sein is no longer the mode of “authenticity” of the human in the respect of a status in which it is completed and confirmed in itself. As a “between”, the human is a being which arrives in itself in the overwhelming of a dimensionality rupturing everything familiar and own, and depriving it of immediate selfhood. It becomes the passage to a position where being is released in its own, noncontingent spatiality and temporality, and where the apprehensive abilities of the human are simultaneously modified to discern this dimensionality.

As Heidegger repeats in *The Event*, we cannot represent ourselves as the part which establishes the difference, as it is being itself which “is” this difference. We can only follow it, abide in it, as it differentiates itself through us.<sup>588</sup> It is due to being’s differentiation of itself into a twofold, can *we* think and differentiate anything at all, including ourselves. According

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<sup>584</sup> GA 71, p. 129.

<sup>585</sup> “der Mensch dem Sein vereignet, das Sein aber dem Menschenwesen zugeeignet ist”, *IuD*, p. 45. [*ID*, p. 36].

<sup>586</sup> “das Geschehnis der *Erkliftung der Wendungsmitte der Kehre des Ereignisses*.”, *Beiträge*, p. 311. [*Contributions*, p. 218].

<sup>587</sup> “Das Dasein ist in der Geschichte der Wahrheit des Seins der wesentliche *Zwischenfall*, d. h. der Einfall jenes Zwischen, in das der Mensch ver-rückt werden muß, um erst wieder er *selbst* zu sein”, *Ibid.*, 317. [p. 223].

<sup>588</sup> GA 71, p. 128.

to my argument, precisely this insight allows us to find a new perspective on identity. Understanding identity as somehow dependent on difference, difference for us today is mainly understood in terms of the difference between beings; between categories, objects, and between subjects. This differentiation confirms us as isolated beings, having to defend our subjective specificity in the face of the endless differing between ourselves and others, the differing between our claim on beings, and that of others. To challenge this compulsion, it is necessary to take a step back, attending to the difference between the consciousness of ourselves as *being at all*, and our being ourselves as individuals. Is the latter fact not dependent on the former? Can any particular identity challenge or bring out the fact that we *already are in being*, and that this is what is most essential to us? Our existence entails the need to search for our innermost identity, but nothing is more indispensable and primordial than the recognition of ourselves as being there at all. When ceasing to take this as the most general fact thinkable, we can begin to perceive being as a matter in itself to which we belong, but is discernible precisely in its difference from us. Self-representation by way of an identity category has already *implicitly* confirmed this original belonging, and at the same time dismissed its unconcealment.

For Hegel, Heidegger appears to argue, it is, in fact, with the act of self-representation in general that the twofold of the difference is thought to be established. In “Hegel and the Greeks” (“Hegel und die Griechen”), Heidegger claims that Hegel misinterpreted Parmenides on exactly this point, taking his notion of Sameness to mean that being, as that to which thinking responds, is a product of thought; that thinking engenders itself. In this sense, Parmenides becomes nothing but a preparation for the thinking of Descartes.<sup>589</sup> The result is the modern belief that identity is established with the movement of self-reflection, in the view on identity as knowledge of the personal, historically and worldly situated self. As *Da-sein* however, Heidegger shows, man must radically disregard ordinary selfhood, the very habit of attempting to find himself by way of the act of reflection.

That being only announces its unconcealment in this site of a “between” accordingly means that it can never manifest itself for the human in its position of subject. As Raffoul holds, “It is not *I* who am the subject of this appropriation: on the contrary I am thrown into it, *by being, in being, and for being it as my own.*”<sup>590</sup> The position of subjectivity must be given up, not as an abandonment of a certain theoretical self-conception of man, but as an in each

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<sup>589</sup> GA 9, p. 435.

<sup>590</sup> Raffoul (2003), p. 256.

case mine, ontological-existential transformation towards the very essence of the human being,<sup>591</sup> its hidden locality (*Ortschaft*).<sup>592</sup> Vallega-Neu accurately expresses what thereby becomes of selfhood, that it now “names an aspect of be-ing’s occurrence as enowning, namely the ‘owning-to’ through which humans find their ‘own,’ their ‘self’ ”.<sup>593</sup>

It is in this sense that the resolution for Heidegger concerns whether man is to remain a subject, that is, remain in a self-understanding based on the self-reference of the own judgment, or whether he can gather the strength to enter a dimension which destroys this closed nature of consciousness.<sup>594</sup> The question of “who” we are, he argues, thereby becomes the question of *whether we are*.<sup>595</sup> Acknowledging the matter from this perspective, it becomes even clearer why Foucault’s proclamation of the death of man in no way can be compared to what is being said here.

## **2. Identity as belonging-together: I-ness as nearness to being**

How, then, is the ontological difference more precisely the resolution and settlement of a very specific kind of identity? Heidegger himself writes in the foreword to *IuD* that the answer to this is implicated in the “harmony” (*Einklang*) that prevails between the terms of *Ereignis* and *Austrag*.<sup>596</sup>

But how is identity in itself to be thought from here? This overwhelming-arrival, how does it occur in a shared time-space, and at the same time within a particular individual? The central work on the question of identity in Heidegger is “The Principle of Identity“. With the valuation of the Hegelian and German idealist accounts of identity, Heidegger likewise takes the law of identity as a starting point, unfolding its inherent contradiction. Amounting to sameness, the reading follows, the law cannot avoid a repetition of the A, thus seemingly exhibiting equality (*Gleichheit*) instead of sameness. Bringing out the meaning of this repetition, Heidegger refers to a section in Plato's *The Sophist*, translated to “Each one of them is different from the (other) two, but itself the same for itself.”<sup>597</sup> In Heidegger's interpretation, this conveys that something can be itself insofar as it is delivered over to itself, being *with it-*

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<sup>591</sup> *GS*, pp. 26-35.

<sup>592</sup> *GA* 71, p. 128.

<sup>593</sup> Vallega-Neu (2003), p. 85.

<sup>594</sup> *Beiträge*, pp. 90-91.

<sup>595</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>596</sup> *IuD*, p. 29.

<sup>597</sup> “Nun ist doch von ihnen jedes der beiden ein anderes, selber jedoch ihm selbst dasselbe.”, *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34. [p. 24].

self.<sup>598</sup> Identity involves an appropriation where a being is drawn to itself through an awareness of this being as a definite something. The being in question abides in itself in so far as it is illuminated by this awareness, as standing within it. While the awareness in question here is something in need of a human being, it is finally no property of the human. Rather, Heidegger seems to imply, it is *being's* awareness of beings, mirrored in or mediated through the awareness of the human perception. Thus, Heidegger continues, the law in fact presumes the realm and truth of identity, namely the realm of being. A is A insofar as it *is* A, insofar as it prevails in the awareness of the A being an A.

Such an interpretation could at least be made in the context of a distinct etymological interpretation that Heidegger makes of the term *Ereignis*, that is unfortunately very difficult to render in English, why Stambaugh has not included it in her translation: “Er-eignen”, he writes, “heißt ursprünglich: er-ugen, d.h. erblicken, im Blicken zu sich rufen, an-eignen”.<sup>599</sup> The words name the event as an appropriation in which something is approached or appropriated in an unusual form of sight or gaze (*Blick*), thus the association to awareness, and perhaps to insight. At the same time, the term partly replaces the notion of *Augenblick*, or rather absorbs it towards a new meaning. What is remarkable about this statement is that it remains unclear what or who it is that embodies its grammatical subject, that is, what or who that is calling and sighting, and consequently what or who it is that is being called and sighted. But this ambiguity is no coincidence, as it is the *simultaneity* (*Gleichzeitigkeit*) of man and being that Heidegger attempts to bring out here. The circumstance that being and beings only arrive together, has a temporal dimension to it.<sup>600</sup> Hence, the term *er-eignen* here tells of how the human acquires a certain sight as he is sighted upon by being, whereupon his awareness, as an awareness of being, becomes inseparable from being's awareness of him. He sees, insofar as he is seen, and thus he is *with* himself insofar as he is conscious of his own presence in this gaze of being. Hence, the event entails a heightened presence of the self, but only as the presence of something that does not originate from this self. It is also for this reason that the human is the one for whom identity is an existential task, and not an external characteristic. Identity as being *with* oneself, demands that we have first assumed the internal differentiation of the self, that we no longer ward it off, because it is only in that distortion of the self that presence and awareness breaks through. In the light of this awareness, we perceive ourselves from a perspective which is not our own. We are ourselves as being with this foreign aware-

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<sup>598</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>599</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 45.

<sup>600</sup> *Beiträge*, p. 349.

ness, as a kind of opening of an inner spaciousness. But this spaciousness is not a private one in a solipsistic respect. Rather, to repeat my argument, being with oneself in this sense means to allow for the eternal omnipresence of being – its “unshaking heart of well-rounded Truth”.

It is at this point that Parmenides again becomes a cardinal reference for Heidegger. In the Parmenidean poem, Heidegger finds the origin of a possible turn of the metaphysical view on identity. For metaphysics, Heidegger holds, identity is a characteristic (*Zug*) in the being of beings. Following Parmenides, however, being must rather be understood as a characteristic of identity. In the strophe translated to “For the same perceiving (thinking) as well as being.”, the Sameness of being and thinking (*voεῖν*) reveals itself as the grammatical subject of identity, as that which holds and carries the proposition.<sup>601</sup> According to Heidegger, this Sameness presents a sense of identity more original than the metaphysical, as it brings out the relation between being and man in which identity obtains its domain. It is this notion of Sameness that Heidegger responds to with his own concept of a belonging-together. Belonging-together captures the phenomenology of the Sameness, the temporal aspect of which is *Ereignis*. Heidegger explains this expression by emphasizing the joint of *belonging* (*gehören*). It is when we apprehend belonging-together through this word, he argues, that it obtains its proper domain. Rather than understanding thought and being as something conflated, as something that is put together, we must hear this togetherness in the sense of a dynamic which first determines thought as well as being.<sup>602</sup> Thought and being belong together, *and* are displayed in their difference, only insofar as their intrinsic unity is held out. It is identity as a matter of an active, painful collision that is communicated here, and not the similarity of an indifferent likeness. Together with the term of holding out, the term belonging-together demonstrates that the foundation of something like authentic identity is an active settlement and carrying. Hence, as Stambaugh paraphrases Heidegger, “The principle (*Satz*) of identity becomes a leap (*Satz*) out of metaphysics”.<sup>603</sup> The leap is a responsibility for the fact that we do not begin our life in a state of static, immediate unity of being, and yet can never be “outside” of being. The leap into the essence of identity is a leap *away* from an existence which is only indifferently present, and into the Nothing, as an abyss and the site from which being first can be disclosed

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<sup>601</sup> “τό γάρ αὐτό νοεῖν ἐστίν τε καὶ εἶναι”/“Das Selbe nämlich ist Vernehmen (Denken) sowohl als auch Sein.”, *IuD*, p. 36. [*ID*, p. 27]. See also *GA* 7, p. 254 and *GA* 10, p. 11.

<sup>602</sup> *IuD*, pp. 37-39. Stambaugh reminds us of the fact that “thinking” in this sense does not refer to the narrow activity of rational thinking, but that also emotions and feelings, as well as the acts and practices which follow from these types of judgment, are included in Heidegger’s definition of the word. Stambaugh (2002), p. 13.

<sup>603</sup> Stambaugh (2002), p. 13. See *IuD*, pp. 41, 48.

as a manifest, pressing and giving matter.<sup>604</sup> Once again the term *Gegenüber*, over-against, is used, as that which appears for sight from this distance of the Nothing. As an over-against, being acknowledges itself as a resistance, yet a resistance that cannot be objectified.<sup>605</sup> This thought echoes the Hegelian notion of the negation of negation, but stresses that while it is inaccessible in the mode of indifference of everyday life, being is neither *inaugurated* with the negating leap away from it. With the leap, being is rather released as that which reigns. In the leap, we drop resistance towards that which always awaited us in so far as we were existing.

With this, Heidegger shows that what is same in this respect is not identical, in the sense that the difference – the ontological difference – is sublated or disappears. Rather, Heidegger argues, difference first *appears*, and this "all the more pressingly, the more resolutely thinking is concerned with the same matter in the same way".<sup>606</sup>

With the term "pressingly", Heidegger again reminds of the fact that what is at stake here is an appropriation of a hidden distress in existence, as the dimension where being first appears as something different from the own I-ness, something of unfamiliar descent. It is for this reason that identity cannot be represented, created or found by thinking itself, but only experienced in a surrendering of the attempt to understand the constitution of the own in terms of the determinations of judgment. The own is found neither in the determination and discernment of thought, nor in the intimacy of feeling, but in an ontological weightiness to which thoughts and feelings are responses. Understanding Heidegger rightly here, it is ultimately a question of surrendering the reference to what we usually grasp to be the location of the self, namely a self-reflexivity expressed in judgments.

But the aim of Heidegger's appropriation of Parmenides is also to understand how the reciprocity of being and the human perception constitute the opening of time-space as such, in which we aim for a spatiotemporal belonging that is discernible for judgment. How does the Sameness of being and man involve our contingent, spatiotemporal and historical identity? Can we exist as human beings without the latter?

For Hegel, identity manifests itself both as an attainment of the subject, and as a historical occurrence of an all-encompassing unity, involving not only history and time as such, but its manifoldness of subjects as well. The problem with this account arises from the unsolved

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<sup>604</sup> *IuD.*, p. 41.

<sup>605</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 70.

<sup>606</sup> "um so bedrängender, je entschiedener ein Denken von derselben Sache auf dieselbe Weise angegangen wird", *ibid.*, p. 55 [*ID*, p. 45].

question of how the transition between these two aspects is to be understood; is identity something by which consciousness is encompassed, or on the contrary an expanding accomplishment brought out by this consciousness? And how can the unpredictable course of history, and our contingent identities, be encompassed by this ubiquitous identity? With his thoughts on *Ereignis*, *Austrag* and *belonging-together*, Heidegger attempts to re-think these questions.

For Heidegger, the foundation of an original Sameness is the acknowledgement of the finitude of existence, experienced as the inherent distress of existence. In this acknowledgement, we recognize a difference within, and yet outside of ourselves, that in all cases somehow pertains to us. We become aware of the fact, or rather facticity, that being is not a matter of direct proximity, that it is not equal to the *being* that we are, but that it is the being-ness of this being, the weight of the "is" that we carry as long as we exist.

But being is also sent as historicity, as a giving of temporal character. To open up to this dimension of being entails a recognition of the distress of the own historical situation. For Heidegger, this corresponds to the recognition of how the distress inherent in existence responds to, and is intertwined with, the distress of a being-historical epoch. For us, it is the distress of machination and power, or the distress of distresslessness, as machination works towards a repression of the unleashed experience of distress. Due to this epochal situation we experience ourselves as incapable of being at home in history and in ourselves. But Heidegger's argument is that this homelessness, when heard properly, leads us precisely into the primordial distress of existence. More precisely, distress reveals a characteristic of being which is not of temporal origin; what is temporal is rather the refusal to acknowledge it. To acknowledge the distress is therefore a question of recognizing the negativity, the impossibility of immediate unity according to the Hölderlinian and Hegelian formulation. Accordingly, the place or locality of being is at once history, and a stillness beyond time.

The enactment in question here responds to being's epochal sending in the sense that we hereby *let* history emerge *as* this sending, rather than an assembly of spatiotemporal, causally ordered occurrences among beings. One can fully "be" in one's historicity, obtain a place within it, insofar as its distress is recognized in its origin, which is being. In other words, the distressing and enframing character of history must no longer be understood as a situation generated by beings, but assumed as a withdrawal or privation of being in which the I has a part on the basis of its historical existence.

This manner of being in history therefore eradicates the distinction between sending as *Schicksal* and as *Geschick*. Historical identity must not, in this view, be understood as a pri-

vate choice of “heroes” or specific identities, nor as a submission to a collectivity or abstraction of other subjects. History is neither the property of the other, nor of the I. For the allotment of being from Moira is, as Ruin argues, “not a question of the destiny of mankind or the people, nor is it an individual destiny, but the destiny of being through which its twofoldness (*Zwiefalt*) takes place”.<sup>607</sup> In the form of belonging that Heidegger refers to, one belongs to others through the belonging to being. Here is a genuine openness and receptivity for other historical and contemporary individuals to be found, as an insight into, and a sharing of, *their* twofold. Already in *SZ*, Heidegger tried to formulate a way of being-with that is settled in authentic existence, where others would be acknowledged from the perspective of their being, rather than their everyday identities and opinions. In this form of historical presence, the human, in the mode of Da-sein, is not being affected by the *subjectivity* of others, but it acknowledges and recognizes the presence, self-conceptions and articulations of others from the perspective of the twofold, as being’s unconcealment and withdrawal. From this stance, it is the difference between the human and being that governs history, and not the differences among beings, or the sense of self that is based on these differings.

Put differently, Da-sein comes to understand its specific historical location and temporality from out of the event in which it becomes a part of history in the authentic respect. The event binds the past and the future to the present, enlightening the own temporality as the temporality of being's own manifestation. In relation to this sending, the various categorial historical identities available in the world become visible as secondary derivations of the semblance of this primordial event – as constellations of δόξα, categories that have always already lost their bond to the specific manifestation of being from out of which they first arose. To be at home in history, to obtain a historically founded identity, is not a question of a belonging to the one or the other being, nor to the multiplicity of beings, taken together as a higher being, but to be pressed into the open realm of being in which they rest. In this settlement, distress turns into granting, void into abundance – being becomes an occurrence in its own right, in which Da-sein takes an essential part.

Certainly, on the level of being-in-the-world, one can never avoid being identified by way of social, historical and biological categories. As long as we are spatiotemporally anchored individuals, we are recognizable according to gender, nationality and alike. But the question is how fundamental we understand these categorizations of judgment to be for our sense of be-

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<sup>607</sup> ”inte fråga om mänsklighetens eller folkets öde, inte heller är det ett individuellt öde, utan varats öde varigenom dess tvåfald (*Zwiefalt*) äger rum“, Hans Ruin, *Frihet, ändlighet, historicitet* (2013), p. 274.

ing; if we approach them from a sense of lack or not. In *clinging* to them, we overlook being in our pursuit of something that can enlighten our understanding of who we are. In an adherence of this kind, we claim the categories, whereupon they are drawn into a historical and social strife where other subjects will demand them as well. Heidegger's own antisemitism shows the magnitude of this risk, and thus how difficult the task of belonging, that he himself advocates, is. In binding himself to a social identity, specified in terms of geography and concrete history, Heidegger forgets the openness of the belonging-together with respect to space and time. When recognizing our primary belonging as that to being, we must also acknowledge that categories cannot fulfil our being. When we no longer experience a lack in our being, identity categories will not be needed in terms of contents that make out the self, and therefore others, with their judgments and claims of the categories, cannot be a threat to one's sense of self. When approaching the common world from a sense of abundance rather than lack, beings are recognized as things in their own right rather than as objects, and one is therefore in the position to address and meet them from a perception of fulfilment rather than need. To refer to Parmenides again: for the existentiality of δόξα, a lack within existence will always remain, a lack that makes wholeness impossible, and which we will attempt to extricate by way of actions and judgments. But for the thinker on the route of ἀλήθεια, the well-roundedness of unity is what prevails; a heart without holes – not because negativity is extinguished, but because it has already been minded as a necessary part, as the void from which this heart is accessible. The void of the Nothing is the other side of being, not its disappearance - but it is also the site where being first reveals this double aspect of itself. In other words, it is only when this void is carried as a distress, that this distress exposes itself as the route to being, and as a necessity inaugurated by being itself.

Categories of identity will always be of use for the purpose of sharing the world, one's being in the world, and the openness to it, with others, historically and geographically. Yet it will be in the remembrance that the judgment using them, thus aiming at expressing being as it takes place in a world, never can lay claim to the same being through them. This is how I interpret the implications of Heidegger's thinking on identity, leaving the question of how well he himself could respond to them open.

What last comment could we make on the similarity and difference between Heidegger and Hegel? Perhaps the following, the purpose being to bring out Heidegger's understanding of the noncontingency of being further: Although Heidegger repudiates Hegel's absolute spirit, he cannot refute the dimension of eternity and stillness in being. In *Introduction to Metaphys-*

ics, Heidegger confirms that being as Sameness in Parmenides, as "the belonging-together of the contending", is expressed in the word ἐν, "the one", or unchangeable, unifying and permanent being.<sup>608</sup> In her sending of being, Moira gives and holds back at the same time. Therefore "nothing else IS or will be apart from that which IS, since Fate has bound it to be whole and unchanging".<sup>609</sup> Seen from this perspective, being prevails in the eternal, having nothing to be added to it – nothing which was not already within it, can ever be generated. In the same way, Heidegger agrees in "The End of Philosophy and The Task of Thinking" that "Ἀλήθεια is nothing mortal, no more than death itself".<sup>610</sup> Therefore, identity must imply the passage into the realm of Oneness. It is in terms of something bound that being can be given and perceived as a sending, as something which unfolds and yet remains the same in its withdrawals and its manifestations.

This, in turn, entails that the dimension of infinitude is an equally present characteristic in being, and Heidegger's refutation of Hegel on this point can therefore only be relative. The relation to being in terms of historicity, is the relation to being as something that is not only well-rounded and eternal, but at the same time unpredictable, something engendering itself towards the unknown, insofar as it yields itself for exhaustible human beings. The possibilities of the future cannot be owned by these beings and their worlds, as the future is determined by the fact that it contains an infinite number of forthcoming epochal constellations. It is merely from the perspective of the individuated Da-sein that being is finite. Yet in the authentic relation to this finitude, the infinitude must nevertheless be sighted, as the very autonomous and unfathomable site of being, making it ultimately inexhaustible for human existence.

This said, it is important to understand why such a speculation or conclusion still is not made directly from a Hegelian perspective. Like Hegel, Heidegger shows how the experience of negativity, of distress and pain, is central to authentic identity and being. Yet in contrast to Hegel, Heidegger continued to explicate this as a historically bound matter, a matter which therefore must be encountered in terms of one's own delimitation in time and space. Heidegger's great achievement is to begin from and remain by the painful and factual condition for the event of identity, as the experience of what it means to be individuated, an experience that must be philosophically included in all accounts of true belonging. Identity can never be considered outside of this condition, and yet it is a profound loss of that which was hitherto regarded as self.

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<sup>608</sup> "Zusammengehörigkeit des Gegenstrebigen", *GA* 40, p. 145. See also *IuD*, p. 35.

<sup>609</sup> Parmenides (2004), *Fragm.* 8.36-38, p. 159.

<sup>610</sup> "Die Ἀλήθεια ist nichts Sterbliches, so wenig wie der Tod selbst.", *GA* 14, p. 85.

In the presence of this loss, where nothing more remains to adhere to than the bareness of this limited life, the most own is sighted in the gaze of a presence with non-human heart.

## Concluding discussion

This study has examined Heidegger's understanding of identity in terms of a belonging-together of man and being, as and in a hermeneutical response to what could be referred to as a subject metaphysical conception of identity. At the end of this argumentation, one central question perhaps seems to have remained unanswered: is identity in this respect ultimately something that we can claim, or something that claims us? Are we the ones to decide upon a belonging-together, or is it what decides upon us? *Is* there a final solution to this dilemma even in Heidegger? However, before we believe ourselves to have returned to the beginning of the work and the leading problem presented there, we should mind the hermeneutics unfolded in it: what has changed at the end are the very premises of how identity is to be understood. The dilemma remaining in Heidegger's account is rooted in a domain which is not accessible to subject metaphysics. Man can "claim" a belonging to being only as *Da-sein*, not as an ego or subject, and conversely, he is claimed in the mode of *Da-sein*, and not in his subjectivity. The question of how one is claiming-claimed in relation to being, is accordingly not the same as the problem of being claimed by subjectivity or objectivity, through history and the otherness of subjects.

With my exposé of Butler's account of the modern problem of identity, I attempted to show how her conception of identity loses itself in paradoxes stemming from the fact that the subject cannot accomplish its own unity. As a subject, the human finds its self, its identity, to be constructed by historically determined institutions, categories and structures. It is by means of these that its subjectivity is tied to objects and other subjects in the world. Exactly because the subject is permanently outside of itself in this sense, as defined by beings remaining different from it, by an otherness which cannot be finally incorporated, the structures constituting the subject are according to Butler's formulation structures of power. The essence of subjectivity thus turns out to be a simultaneous confirmation and disintegration of the ego. In its attempt to be self-legislating, the subject finds itself to be bound by the chains of an authority of which it is not the originator, challenging it in situations in which it believed itself to be self-governing.

Following Heidegger, this condition would neither be eternal, nor arbitrarily historical. That it is being-historical, means that it is a way in which being sends itself in timespace, in terms of a metaphysics of the subject. As a subject, man can only understand who he is in terms of *a* being among a manifold of other beings, claiming or repudiating them. In this

comportment, being is regarded as abstract, general or a “nothing”, leaving the subject and its objects as the only discernible entities.

With a reference to the Hölderlinian fragment “On Judgment and Being”, I attempted to show that the subject’s aim for an identity that overcomes the split of its self-reflexivity, a split that is anchored in the inner dichotomy of subjectivity and objectivity, in fact arises from the human strive for being. Being, Hölderlin shows, is the mode in which self-consciousness, that causes its own split, has suspended the restlessness of its self-reflexivity, its judgment or ego – in other words, itself. It is a mode in which this consciousness “is” itself beyond or before its internal differentiation into subject-I and object-I. Yet, exactly because of this differentiated nature of consciousness, being, according to Hölderlin, remains inaccessible to egoity. It is comprehensible only as a settlement of self-consciousness, as its identity, and not its abolishment.

In Hegel’s appropriation of this thought, however, self-consciousness was reconsidered as the very means of the transformation of identity into being; the subject, for Hegel, is the tool for its own self-overcoming. But with this interpretation, Heidegger argues, being can no longer be separated from the subjectivity of self-consciousness, and thus leads into its own oblivion. Hegel’s philosophy, according to Heidegger, is caught in this ambiguity between the understanding of being as something qualitatively other than the unification or identity between subject and object, and the equalization of it with this identity. It is from this equalization that the Butlerian critique of Hegel obtains its domain, rightly demonstrating how the subject, by confirming itself as a stable reference point for the whole of world history, in fact loses this stability.

In contrast to this, Heidegger seeks a new way to express what it means to be unified in terms of a belonging to being in its own right. His term “belonging-together” signifies an experience so original that neither being nor the human can be comprehended as previously existing agents that are subsequently brought towards each other. Viewed from the human perspective however, this signifies an experience in which the “is” that discloses existence can stand for itself, where the belonging is a belonging to the nakedness of this existence as such, as something that is not first created by the relationships to beings.

But as long as it has a human perception, Da-sein, because it is a “between” beings and being, will experience the unconcealment of being by means of a double-sidedness. As it is not created by human hands, nor the human mind, being is in one sense that which was always

already there, an encircling wholeness that Da-sein discovers itself to be a part of. In this respect, being is present as an insight into its own pervasiveness, an insight given to Da-sein.

At the same time, this giving acknowledges itself only for an individual that has acknowledged its own finitude, its limitedness in timespace. This acceptance is not a matter of passive knowledge of an impending end, but of *actively* resisting the continuous, natural impulse to refuse the presence of death in life. This resistance demands a vigorous readiness to allow for an agony that claims not only the mind, but the body, as the factual foothold of the finitude of the human. In this resistance, being emerges as that which claims the individual in order to carry the human beyond itself, beyond individuality. In contrast to the split that stamps identity on the subject-object-axis, depriving the human of an identity through haunting it exactly at the point where it believes itself to act on its own authority, belonging-together could be viewed a collision where a devoted suffering turns out to hide a belonging beyond categories and words.

This belonging to being is not something that writes the human out of the world and its history, as if occurring beyond it. On the contrary, as Da-sein, it anchors the human in the very essence of the phenomena of history and world. Being can only disclose itself in an individualized Da-sein, but it is at the same time the common being of all beings. Thus, in Da-sein, the human relation to the various, shifting beings of the world will be rooted in the apprehension of and the responsiveness to their being, acknowledging how this manifoldness manifests the meaningful dynamic of indivisible being. Therefore, from this qualified perspective, the identification with one or the other being within this wholeness cannot be viewed as other than temporary, and ultimately illusory, attempts to construct the own out of parts of that which cannot be divided, namely being.

At the same time, being has no written limits or borders in the same respect that beings do. Its epochality displays that being is what cannot be predicted, as its essence allows it to hide, to appear as force and as decline – all as movements that constitutes its historicity, touching and determining what is perceivable for us as world history. To be historically at home thus means to be able to dwell in the shifts of being, managing to bear them *as* epochs of being, rather than expressions of subjective intentionality. Still in an epoch characterized by a refusal of being's unconcealment, the human can obtain a belonging to the own historicity when the distress of this refusal is taken up *as* an appearance of being, thus transforming distress into giving.

Within this transformation of the meaning of identity, the question of the relation between the active and the passive reception of a belonging-together is no longer that of the imprisoned subject, but a query that arises from within the event of being. As such, it has no settling answer, but remains a task.

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